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LETTERS

TO THE

PEERS OF SCOTLAND.

BY THE

EARL OF LAUDERDALE.

LONDON:

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MDCCXCIV.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no ſubject which has more exerciſed the ingenuity of thoſe who have thus intruded on the public, than the framing of what might appear an adequate apology for the preſumption it exhibits.

I am perfectly conſcious that ambition of applauſe is the motive to which ſuch an attempt will be generally attributed, and that in the mind

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of moſt, its failure, as in ſimilar caſes, will be attended with a degree of contempt proportionable to the ſuppoſed exorbitance of the expectation of the man who preſumes to addreſs them; and I can aſſure you, that my experience of the extent of the goodnature and indulgence of men on theſe ſubjects, and the little practice I have had of arranging or ſtating my thoughts in writing, would have prevented me from addreſſing theſe letters to you, and ſtill more, from ſubjecting them to the public eye, at any other period than in times ſuch as thoſe in which we live.

But whilſt the induſtry with which calumnies

calumnies have been circulated, renders, in my apprehenſion, an explanation of my motives to you neceſſary; an attempt by a plain and ſimple ſtatement to bring back to the recollection of the nation the various ſteps by which folly, art, and miſmanagement have combined to miſlead the public mind, and to ſink the country into its preſent ſtate of calamity, cannot be diſadvantageous to them: and if it exhibits in its imperfections a proof of my want of ability, I ſhall in my own mind feel ample compenſation, if it produces in yours the conviction that I am ready to hazard any thing rather than that my public conduct ſhould not ſtand fairly in your eſtimation.

The impreſſion which fine words make is one thing, and the conviction of reaſon another; I have no habits of compoſition, and if I had, I have not vanity ſufficient to ſuppoſe that I could miſlead you into an approbation of that which appeared to myſelf culpable. But, convinced of the rectitude of my conduct, it is not by art I wiſh to court your approbation, but by reaſon to command it; and in attempting to effect this, I look forward with confidence, that the ſtrength of the caſe, brought under view at a moment when prejudice has in ſome degree ſubſided, will ſink in your minds the imperfections of the ſtatement.

In relying on the nature of the times as an apology for my intruſion, I mean not to allude to any of thoſe misfortunes, ſo often dwelt upon, which are the univerſal attendants of warfare; nor to thoſe themes of complaint which, though often true, have been generally maliciouſly regarded as the reſort of diſappointed politicians. The ſcenes of unparalleled diſaſters, that have followed one another with unprecedented rapidity, appropriate in the minds of all, characteriſtic calamities to the times; and there are none who have attended to the periodical publications of the day, who muſt not have obſerved, that a ſyſtem of ſcandalous inſinuation and diſgraceful ca-

lumny has been carried on by men ſuppoſed to be under the influence of Government, and who have undoubtedly by them been ſcreened from the juſtice of their country *, as novel in itſelf,

* The following libel, amongſt many others, appeared about a year ago, in a paper called The True Briton.

"How ſilently the rogues of London have paſſed "over the ſwindling and fraudulous tricks of the con- "ventional rogues of Paris! They have not applauded "the meaſures of confiſcating the property of ſtrangers "in the public funds in France, and they dare not con- "demn it. In the one caſe they would be hooted at, and "ſpurned by every honeſt man in the kingdom; and "in the ſecond, they would loſe their ſalaries; and "which by the by they are likely to do very ſoon; for "Danton has publicly declared that no confidence is to "be placed in the Engliſh at Paris, who call themſelves "the victims of the Britiſh Government; and that they "ought

itſelf, as it is diſgraceful to the age. If therefore a ſenſe of the firſt, which is now

" ought all to be impriſoned. Lord Kenyon appears to " be of the ſame opinion in ſome caſes that have come " before him ; and the Traitors, who would have ſacri- " ficed their country to France, are now very properly " puniſhed by being renounced by both. O ye Prieſt- " leys ! Ye Froſts ! Ye Stones ! Ye Paines ! Ye Sir " Robert Smiths ! and ye Lauderdales ! What ſay you " to this opinion of Danton, and the loſs of your pro- " perty ?—You have neither character nor conſideration " in France or England :—deſpiſed in the latter, and " ſpurned by the former, where will ye ſeek refuge ?"

Upon applying to the Attorney General for proof of the publication, I was by him with great civility and attention informed, that he had no authority over the officers employed to purchaſe the newſpapers ; he referred me however to the Treaſury, and ſtated, with that certainty which his idea of juſtice and propriety ſuggeſted, his conviction that I would there get that which on a ſimilar application had been granted to others.

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now pretty generally felt, can vindicate in your minds the attempt I am about to make, I ſhould flatter myſelf that none can abſtain from ſympathizing with the deſire I feel, by fair and plain explanation, of doing away the

But after a long evaſive correſpondence with the Secretary of the Treaſury, though he acknowledged its having been granted in ſeveral caſes, ſome of which he named, I found I could not even learn from him the mode in which my application ſhould be made.

In this dilemma I wrote to Mr. Pitt himſelf, and, by his directions, laid my requeſt before the Board in the ſhape of a Memorial, which was by them immediately negatived.—The whole correſpondence is now in my poſſeſſion.

I perfectly well know the aſſiduity with which the report has been circulated, of my poſſeſſing property in France, and even encouraged by thoſe who I believe muſt have been as much convinced of the falſehood of it as myſelf.

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effect which may have been unjuſtly produced by the laſt.

Various are the modes to which the art and ambition of Miniſters have reſorted, as means of obtaining or retaining their ſituations. But it was reſerved for this Adminiſtration to endeavour to ſecure their ill-got power, by coupling the exiſtence of the government of the country with their own exiſtence in office; to treat, with unparalleled preſumption, oppoſition to them, even if conducted by means formerly practiſed by themſelves *, as rebellion

* See the Preamble to the Duke of Richmond's Bill, and his Letter to Lieutenant Colonel Sharman; the Reſolutions

rebellion againſt the ſtate; to hold out the continuance of their meaſures as the only ſecurity for the government of the country, and the moment of their downfall as the ſure æra of a revolution. To eſtabliſh this belief through the medium of their own ſuperior merit or management, has long appeared, even to themſelves, impracticable;—but they have ſtooped, by calumny and inſinuation, to endeavour to create a miſrepreſentation of the motives of others, and thus have looked to the diffidence which, by art, they could create in the minds of the public, of the principles of their op-

Reſolutions at the Thatched Houſe Tavern, where Mr. Pitt was preſent; and his Speeches on Reform.

ponents,

ponents, as the ſource of that ſecurity which the knowledge of their own merits made them deſpair of acquiring, by attempting to eſtabliſh a confidence in themſelves.

It is to do away any impreſſion which their induſtry in this purſuit may have made, that, in the following letters, I wiſh to diſcloſe to you the real motives that have actuated a man who, on the ſubject of the preſent war, has been a uniform oppoſer of their meaſures; to unveil to you the diſguiſed motives of thoſe who have contributed to involve the nation in it; and to exhibit to you that ſeries of unſyſtematic miſmanagement, which, as it will ac-

count for the calamities that are paſt, will teach you what you have to expect in future.

By theſe means I hope, if it has been any where ſucceſsfully eſtabliſhed, to diſlodge the prejudice, that there is any thing in common betwixt the power and the meaſures of thoſe who now manage the affairs of the country, and the exiſtence of our happy Conſtitution.

The attempt is that which ought to be as grateful to the Sovereign as to his People; for if the love of the Conſtitution, univerſally prevalent, makes the public voice anxiouſly expreſs

preſs its deſire of perpetuating the bleſſings which from it they derive, the Sovereign and his Family have under it too deep a ſtake, I truſt in God too permanent a one, to wiſh to ſee its exiſtence coupled, even in idea, with that of any adminiſtration; far leſs with that of an adminiſtration who by their meaſures have brought themſelves into ſuch a ſituation, that they can neither advance without ruin, nor retreat without diſgrace.

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

AS the numerous publications that have at various periods appeared, on the origin and progreſs of the French Revolution, are admitted by all to have contributed much to the amuſement and information of the public; ſo it muſt alſo be acknowledged, that this important ſubject has been generally treated with a degree of talent that has juſtly created a well-founded opinion of the capacity, and an admiration of the ingenuity, of thoſe who have in this country entered

entered at large into the conſideration of it. No man can entertain a higher reſpect than I do for the uncommon diſplay of abilities that has been exhibited on this occaſion ; I ſhould indeed conceive any wiſh to detract from their merit as a mark of my own want of taſte and judgement. I muſt however acknowledge, that I cannot reflect on the manner in which it has been diſcuſſed, or the point of view in which it has almoſt been univerſally held out to our attention, without loſing in a conſiderable degree the pleaſure I derived from peruſing them.

It might reaſonably have been ſuppoſed that a great and ſudden convulſion in a neighbouring kingdom would, in the firſt inſtance, have led to an inveſtigation of the conſequences it was likely to produce to our own country, and to the conſideration of the line of conduct which it was prudent

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and proper for us to purſue; and it would have perhaps been fortunate, if, inſtead of launching into the wide ſea of its univerſal operation, they had limited themſelves to the narrow view of its effects in our national ſecurity; if, inſtead of inveſtigating its connection with the general intereſts of man, and the ſtate of happineſs or miſery it was likely to diffuſe over the world, the writers of this country had confined themſelves more immediately to its connection with the intereſts of Engliſhmen, and the proſperity of this nation. The ſubject, even in this point of view, ſeemed to furniſh ample ground for ſpeculation. The deſtruction of a government whoſe monarchs and ſtateſmen had ſo often diſturbed the tranquillity of this country, and ſacrificed the peace of Europe to that reſtleſs ſpirit of ambition and political intrigue, with which experience had taught us that they had for upwards of a

century been uniformly animated, was in itſelf deeply intereſting, and the conſequences of it to us could not fail to appear to all ſufficiently important.

But, dazzled with the greatneſs of the ſcene, and the magnitude of the queſtions agitated in the exalted imaginations of thoſe who have treated on the ſubject, the narrow views of national intereſt and national ſecurity have been eclipſed. Every queſtion relative to the organization of the internal government of France has been conſidered as intimately connected with the general intereſts of mankind, and the immediate happineſs of the univerſe. Loſt to the recollection of all national feeling, or perhaps looking with contempt on the poſſeſſion of it, —as citizens of the world, they have ſtepped forward to the conteſt with all the prejudices of citizens of France they have generally terminated in conducting it.

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An admirer however of that wiſdom which diſtinguiſhed the conduct of M. de Vergennes, who, at the commencement of our conteſt with America, anxiouſly courted the attention of the learned and ingenuous of his country, to the inveſtigation of the conſequences that were likely to reſult to France and Spain from the ſtruggle; and left us to diſcuſs amongſt ourſelves the abſtract queſtions concerning the due limits of that filial affection which might be expected from a colony, or the extent of that right of taxation for which we contended;—it will be my object in this letter, alone to draw your attention to the Revolution of France, as it has affected the political ſituation of this country.

A uniform opponent of that ſyſtem of conduct which has been adopted, I ſhall, by purſuing this inquiry, have an opportunity

of diſplaying to you the real grounds on which I have acted—of ſubjecting to your view the motives which, in the diſcuſſion of the important queſtions that have preſented themſelves for deciſion, have regulated my conduct—and I ſhall have thus the ſatisfaction of thinking, that, if I ſhould unfortunately meet with your diſapprobation, that diſapprobation will ariſe from a fair difference of opinion, and not from any prejudice created by thoſe libellous inſinuations, with which it is the faſhion of the day to aſſail thoſe who wiſh to build their opinions upon the ſound foundation of reaſon uninfluenced by temporary alarms, or who have not yet learned to make their public conduct uniformly ſubſervient to their private views of intereſt.

The Revolution in France, whilſt no one yet ſeemed alive to the idea that the imme-

diate intereſts of this country would be affected by it, had attracted the attention of all:—by the diſcerning in France it had long, from the ſituation of that country, been foreſeen; but in this—where we were not likely to derive any information from the intercourſe of our Government with its Court, who were intereſted to conceal the ſituation; nor from our travellers, who in general aſſociated with the Clergy and Nobility, a claſs of men that appear to have remained blind to their ſituation to the laſt—it came upon us by ſurpriſe: and if the event itſelf was unexpected, the mode in which it was conducted was no leſs ſo. The energy and vigour diſplayed in the proceedings of the States General, the reſolution and firmneſs which diſtinguiſhed their meaſures, contraſted with that levity and frivolity which the nation had formerly exhibited, and which we we had long conceived to be the chief feature

in their character, whilſt it augmented the ſurpriſe, naturally added to the intereſt which was univerſally felt in the ſtruggle; and there exiſted none who did not ſee with aſtoniſhment—many who viewed with admiration—the great and animated exertions of a people contending for what all, of neceſſity, regarded as the object of the greateſt importance that could occupy the mind of man.

Whilſt it thus gratified by its novelty, and intereſted the ſpeculations of thoſe who had made the mind of man, the progreſs of ſociety, and the nature of government, the ſubject of abſtract inveſtigation—it afforded to the politician, who conſidered only the ſituation of this country, matter of joy and exultation. The extinction of a government, whoſe reſtleſs ſpirit of intrigue, whoſe continued love of warfare, whatever might be the character of the monarch on the throne,

or the ſtateſmen that ſurrounded him, promiſed to the nations of Europe the enjoyment of more peace and tranquillity than they had hitherto poſſeſſed; to us, in particular, the benefits that ſeemed likely to attend it were great. We daily felt the advantages of the increaſe of our capital, ariſing from that transfer of moveable property which always has, and which always will take place, from a country in a ſtate of revolution, to that country the tranquillity of whoſe government ſeems to afford the greateſt proſpect of ſecurity. In the circumſtances which attended the internal arrangements in which France was engaged, we ſaw what we thought conſtituted the impoſſibility of any attack being made on her part for years: in anticipating the peace and tranquillity we were likely thus to enjoy, we began to perceive the rapid diminution of that national debt with which we were loaded,

and which forms the only check upon the enterprifing ſpirit of the nation: in anticipating that which the other nations of Europe were likely to enjoy, we ſaw the extenſion of our commerce by the increaſed demand of our manufactures, upon which we knew our wealth, our proſperity, and our importance as a nation, ultimately to depend.

Our hopes of ſecurity reſted not alone upon the deſtruction of the old government of France: the hatred and deteſtation in which all the principles that had actuated it were held by thoſe who ſeemed to ſucceed to the management of the government of that country, afforded us well-grounded hopes that innovations would not be confined to arrangements in her interior government; it in a degree confirmed the reaſonable expectation, which we formed, of ſeeing a change in that

that ſyſtem which ſhe had long purſued in her intercourſe with foreign nations, not leſs beneficial to herſelf, than it was likely to be to the reſt of Europe.

The language too which upon all occaſions ſhe uſed, the ſentiments which at firſt diſtinguiſhed all her public acts, as they ſpoke an averſion to hoſtilities, a deſire of cultivating the arts of peace, tended not a little to eſtabliſh that opinion of the advantage to be derived from the change, which general reaſoning had taught us to think we were likely to enjoy.

Such were the happy proſpects entertained by almoſt all;—by thoſe who judged from the documents that were in the hands of every one—by thoſe whoſe ſituation might be ſuppoſed to give them acceſs to preferable ſources of information—by the philoſopher,

loſopher who, in his cloſet, viewed with pleaſure the advantages which mankind were likely to derive from the exiſtence of a free government, over a people who had long laboured under a preſſure of laws and regulations, with which the vicious ambition, the folly and the ignorance of its old government had loaded it—as well as by the practical politician, who, in the ſenate, announced with eagerneſs the advantages which we as a nation were likely to derive from the change; and whilſt in the pulpit we heard it employ the eloquence of Dr. Price, in the Houſe of Commons it commanded the exertions of Mr. Pitt, who, alluding to it in his memorable ſpeech on the finances of the country, in February 1792, declared, "That unqueſtionably there never was a "time when, from the ſituation of Europe, "we might more reaſonably expect fifteen "years of peace than we may at the preſent "moment."

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With what aſtoniſhment will he, who at a future period reads the hiſtory of the day, ſee, within a few pages, all theſe proſpects of peace and ſecurity vaniſh before his eye!—With what aſtoniſhment muſt every one retrace in his recollection, that though it is little more than two years ſince the declaration was made, this country has been engaged, for near a year and a half, in one of the moſt expenſive and diſaſtrous wars of which our hiſtory affords us any recollection—has been with induſtry employed, by remonſtrances, intrigues and ſubſidies, in endeavouring to engage every European power in the conflict—and in purſuing a ſyſtem that none ever held out more ſtrongly as deſtructive to our intereſts, than thoſe who have been the promoters and conductors of it!

That it has been entered into with the approbation of the public, is a thing which cannot

cannot be diſputed; but it ought always to be recollected, that as national character is moulded and framed from the form of the government under which we live—as the penſiveneſs or levity which diſtinguiſhes individuals, the nature of the inveſtigations in which they are led to occupy their minds, the characteriſtics of the reſults which they are induced to form, depend much on the government and inſtitutions under which they live—ſo it is in the power of all governments to communicate temporary impreſſions, and in general for a time to guide the minds of the people over whom they preſide;—and perhaps there has been no period when more pains were taken, by alarms, by miſrepreſentation and defamation, to affect the public mind, and reconcile it to the ſyſtem which has been purſued.

Taught to value the bleſſings of peace, by the experience of the benefit during theſe

theſe laſt ten years we have derived from it, by the unparalleled ſituation and proſperity we had attained; ſtill alive to the recollection of the calamities which had attended a perſeverance in the American war, and the ruin in which by it we had well nigh been involved; having imbibed pretty generally, from the ſpeculations of the enlightened age in which we live, an opinion that hardly any ſucceſs, or the attainment of any object we could imagine to ourſelves, could compenſate to us as a nation for the certain calamities of war; viewing, in the interruption of our commerce, in the expence in which we inevitably muſt be involved, certain and ſure misfortunes which no acquiſition of foreign territory could counterbalance or repay; it was no light and trivial reaſon, it was no moderate fermentation of opinion, that could have inſured a patient hearing for any one who

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propoſed to involve us in hoſtilities; and nothing ſhort of the hope of being able to convince the nation that it was neceſſary for its exiſtence, ſeemed to afford any proſpect of its being univerſally reliſhed.

To produce theſe effects no exertion was neglected, by every inſinuation and management. The belief was impreſſed on our minds, that the balance of power in Europe, for which we had ſo often contended, was deſtroyed; that our allies, whom we were in honour and intereſt bound to defend, were about to be ſacrificed to a degree of ambition, of the extent of which, even the recollection of Lewis the Fourteenth could furniſh us with no idea; and laſtly, that that conſtitution under which we enjoyed happineſs and proſperity, and which almoſt all equally agreed in admiring, was about to be undermined. The horrors committed

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by the French, whilſt the preſſure of external foes, and the real grounds from which they had originated, were kept out of ſight, were anxiouſly brought forward to rouſe the paſſions, and by prejudice to bar in our thoughts every idea of the poſſibility of treating. By our fears and our hopes we were alternately aſſailed and flattered; and the number of viſionary republicans in this country, ready to co-operate in the deſtruction of our conſtitution, were repreſented to us as alone to be equalled by the number of imaginary royaliſts in France, who were ready to join us upon our firſt appearance in the field; and whilſt the conſideration of the ſtrength, of the great military ſkill and experience of the powers with whom we were about to co-operate, flattered us, on the Continent, with ſpeedy and ſplendid ſucceſs to be attained at no very immoderate expence, we were taught to look forward

ward with avidity to the proſpect of mercantile advantage, which the deſtruction of the naval power of France, and the poſſeſſion of her colonies would afford.

Such were the opinions that induſtry and power combined ſucceſsfully to propagate; and it became the creed of all, that as war was the ſure means of extending our conſequence and importance abroad, ſo at home it was the only one of ſecuring peace and tranquillity, and of preſerving that conſtitution which we had all ſuch an intereſt in maintaining; in the preſervation of peace, in the idea of obtaining redreſs or ſecurity by treaty, were every where diſcovered the ſeeds of external calamity, and of internal convulſion.—To doubt, to heſitate, far more to advance an opinion to the contrary, was to ſubject yourſelf to the charge, and even in the ideas of many to furniſh proof complete, of connections with the enemies of

of the country abroad, and with ſecret fomenters of ſedition at home.

Time and experience have now, in a degree, diſpelled all thoſe confuſed conceptions of imaginary ſucceſs, which ſo univerſally floated in the minds of the people of this country;—the events on the Continent; the enormity of the expence already with certainty anticipated; the extent of the taxes which muſt be laid on; the conſideration of the loſs of property and reſtraint of liberty, which accumulation of taxes always produces, have roufed pretty generally doubts of the expediency of war; but in the mouths of almoſt all, if not in their minds, peace is ſtill ſtigmatized as likely to be productive of every poſſible evil; and the real calamities which we ſee and feel from war, are dogmatically repreſented as likely to be exceeded by thoſe which we imagine will at-

tend, or which, perhaps as a ſacrifice to our conſiſtency, we obſtinately attribute to peace.

Before this change took place, to have attempted any explanation of my motives, any vindication of my conduct, with hopes of ſucceſs, would have been fooliſh and abſurd; nay, even now I am diffident whether the advocate for peace—he who ſees in war no poſſible advantage, and every ſpecies of calamity; he who from experience regards our perſeverance in it as the ſure method of nouriſhing and creating internal ſedition and convulſion; as the undoubted means of degrading us as a nation, and ſinking our relative conſequence amongſt the powers of Europe—can flatter himſelf with meeting amongſt the public many who will peruſe with an impartial eye what he may be diſpoſed to ſtate; or who will not reſt ſatisfied, when the nature of the attempt

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here dawns upon them, with anticipating the abſurdity of his arguments, and prejudging the wickedneſs of his concluſion.

From you, however, whoſe partiality I have experienced, whoſe liberality of ſentiment I know, I truſt for favour, and flatter myſelf I indulge no ill-grounded expectation, in hoping that I ſhall be enabled to engage your attention to a ſhort inveſtigation into the nature of the Revolution in France, and a conſideration of the effects which the line of conduct we have purſued, and are purſuing in conſequence of it, has had upon this country; as well as to what probably would have been the conſequence of our ſteadily endeavouring to perſevere in that ſyſtem of neutrality which we adopted on the firſt appearance of it, and that predilection for peace which at that time manifeſted itſelf in our conduct. In doing this it is my intention in this letter, to conſider the

nation as without party, and to view them as if with unanimity they had adopted the one or the other line.

It has been in general the happineſs of thoſe who ſpeculate upon, and ſtill more of thoſe who are called to conduct the affairs of a great nation, that events, however important and extraordinary in themſelves, are ſeldom ſo completely iſſolated; ſo wide of the uſual range of ſpeculation, or unlike any thing that the page of hiſtory records, as to deprive us, in the inveſtigations that lead to the forming of thoſe opinions neceſſary for the regulation of our conduct, of that benefit which we acquire from the experience of others; of that ſureſt of all guidances which we derive from avoiding the errors, and adopting that which has proved itſelf by events to be the wiſdom of thoſe who have preceded us. There are, however,

however, many things which diſtinguiſh the French Revolution; perhaps ſome that form the moſt remarkable and important features of it, ſo novel in themſelves, ſo unlike any thing with which the hiſtory of man renders us familiar, as to force the politician, in meaſuring the ſteps that it is fit to purſue, to have recourſe excluſively to general principles, without which, undoubtedly, the application of the ſkill of no one can be perfect, and which, aided by practical experience, is what alone enables him to come to ſure and definite concluſions.

Many are the convulſions, numerous indeed are the revolutions, with which the annals of the world make us converſant;—acts of perſonal oppreſſion of individuals; the ambition of chiefs; the ſtruggles of contending parties; the jealouſies of the various or-

ders in the community; the proud oppreſſions of elated monarchs, with all their conſequences, have but too often extended their baneful influence over the different nations with which hiſtory has rendered us acquainted. We all recollect the events that followed the violated chaſtity of Lucretia; the judicial murder of a Horne and an Egmont, and the firm and noble reſiſtance made to acts of extortion by a Hampden. We cannot forget the generous ſtruggles for liberty which diſtinguiſh the hiſtory of our own country, and the ultimate expulſion of its monarchs. But in vain ſhall we conſult our memories, in vain ſhall we attempt in retracing hiſtory, to diſcover the features of a nation that had exiſted for centuries under a form of government, in which we had been taught to believe that it had long habitually prided itſelf; where, without any inſtance of immediate active oppreſſion

that

that drew forth reſiſtance; without any act of tyranny on the part of the monarch; nay, with a general belief, even in his enemies, of his goodneſs; without any ſtruggle amongſt the different orders of the ſtate; all ſeemed to agree in the neceſſity of ſuch alterations as virtually amounted to *a diſſolution of its exiſting government.* Yet he who looks at the ſituation of France, who reads with attention the numerous addreſſes of its parliaments, the accounts of the enthuſiaſm with which they were received by the people, who examines the propoſitions entertained by the Nobility in the Aſſembly of the Notables, and the Addreſs propoſed by the Biſhop of Blois, which was agreed to and preſented by the Clergy, cannot abſtain from admitting, that all orders of the community ſeemed to aſſent to this *propoſition.* Nay, the ſchemes of innovation, to the

extent of alteration of what had long been its practical conſtitution, ſucceſſively brought forward by its Miniſters, ſhewed a conviction, even on the part of thoſe who managed the government, of the neceſſity of a change. The Aſſemblée des Notables of M. de Calonne, the Cours Plenier of M M. de Brienne and Lamoignon, the calling together the States General by M. Neckar, were all ſucceſſive proofs of the opinion of thoſe Miniſters. And the Court, in the edict for aſſembling the States General, which gave to the Tiers Etats a number equal to the other two orders, ſeemed not only to pronounce the neceſſity of the extinction of the government that exiſted in practice, but to declare the inadequacy (to the ſituation of the times) of thoſe checks and inſtitutions, which exiſted in France at a former period.

There

There were few who conſidered its lingering exiſtence, that did not foreſee in the calling together the States General, the death warrant of the exiſting government of France, and who did not look to the period of their meeting, as ſubſtantially the moment of its diſſolution. There was none who did not perceive, ſoon after they were aſſembled, that the practical government of the country, which had long exiſted, and under which the character of the nation had been formed, and the habits of individuals contracted, was annihilated; who did not view with aſtoniſhment the little reſiſtance with which its diſſolution was effected; who could regard in any other light, than as in a manner the operation of magic, the deſtruction of that Baſtille which had been for ages the dread of France; the defection of that army, whoſe attachment to their monarch had been the theme

of

of the world; and the aſſumption of the powers of government by a National Aſſembly, of the exiſtence of which the hiſtory of their country furniſhes not the moſt remote precedent.

New and extraordinary as this phænomenon may appear, unaccountable as at firſt ſight it may ſeem, we may trace its origin to circumſtances from whence it muſt have naturally proceeded, to cauſes however, which being themſelves novel in their nature, never could exhibit their effects till the age in which we live.

The ſyſtem of providing for the extraordinary expences of a government, by mortgaging the public revenues, is an invention of a modern date;—the treaſures ſeized by Julius in Rome, during the civil wars; thoſe poſſeſſed by the different Grecian republics;

the immenſe ſums amaſſed by the ſucceſſors of Alexander, ſufficiently ſhew the prudent practice of antiquity, in providing in the time of peace and tranquillity for thoſe expences which might be neceſſary in the moment of public exigency.

From ancient hiſtory, we can therefore derive no experience of the conſequences which attend carrying to exceſs that funding ſyſtem firſt introduced by ſome of the modern Italian ſtates, and which in this century has been carried by our own, as well as other European nations, to ſo alarming an extent. In modern times, the conſequences of it had been the ſubject of much ingenious ſpeculation amongſt the learned, but we poſſeſſed no practical experience that could make us acquainted with the extent of the evils with which it might be connected;—the rapid progreſs of commerce and manufactures,

tures, the increaſing proſperity and accumulated wealth which attended them amongſt the nations that carried this ſyſtem the furtheſt, had enabled them, by a gradual increaſe of taxes, to palliate the miſchiefs that ſeemed to flow from it, and in a degree to arreſt the diſorder in its progreſs. We had witneſſed, indeed, many of the evils connected with its ſlighter ſymptoms, even on our own robuſt conſtitution; but the fatal effects of the more advanced ſtages of the diſorder upon the weakly frame of the French government, preſented a new ſcene to our view. The eyes of all had been long opened to the fallacy of that fanciful ſophiſtry, that ſaw in public incumbrances, the riches and the wealth of the people who contracted them, that viewed them as uſeful engines for promoting the commerce and proſperity of the nation in which they exiſted; but the extent of the evil, the ulti-

mate

mate conſequences, which it was likely to produce, could be accurately limited or defined in the ſpeculation of none. Even the experience of what had happened under one form of government, if it had exiſted, would have afforded no concluſion, that could have enabled us, with preciſion, to infer what might be the event in another. For if on the one hand it appeared clear that the ſyſtem might be continued, and the load of debt augmented, as long as the ingenuity of the financier could render palatable, or the government enforce the payment of thoſe taxes which it made neceſſary; ſo, on the other, it was obvious that the extent of his ſkill muſt of neceſſity be regulated by the opulence or poverty of the community, over whoſe affairs he preſided; and, that the power to enforce, muſt depend upon the nature of the inſtitutions and government of that country in which the ſyſtem was adopted.

adopted.—"Our popular government," ſays Mr. Hume, "perhaps will render it diffi-"cult or dangerous for a Miniſter to venture "on ſo deſperate an expedient as that of "a voluntary bankruptcy. And though "the Houſe of Lords be altogether com-"poſed of proprietors of land, and the "Houſe of Commons chiefly; and conſe-"quently neither of them can be ſuppoſed "to have great property in the funds; yet, "the connection of the members may be "ſo great with the proprietors, as to render "them more tenacious of public faith, than "prudence, policy, or even juſtice, ſtrictly "ſpeaking, requires; and perhaps too, our "foreign enemies may be ſo politic as to "diſcover that our ſafety lies in deſpair, "and may not therefore ſhew the danger, "open and barefaced, till it be inevitable. "The balance of power in Europe, our "grand-fathers, our fathers, and we, have

"all

" all deemed too unequal to be preſerved
" without our attention and aſſiſtance:—*but*
" *our children, weary of the ſtruggle, and*
" *fettered with incumbrances, may ſit down*
" *ſecure, and ſee their neighbours oppreſſed*
" *and conquered, till at laſt they themſelves,*
" *and their creditors, lie both at the mercy of*
" *the conqueror; and this, properly enough,*
" *be denominated the violent death of our*
" *public credit.*"

But in making this conjecture, Mr. Hume could alone have reference to a government in which the nature of its political inſtitutions had led to the burthens being equally ſpread over all, and in which the reſources had been, by that means, fairly exhauſted. Had he contemplated a nation, where the financier was hampered with privileges, and hemmed in on all ſides with abſurd

abſurd exemptions, whoſe government and political inſtitutions were ſo weakened with the monopolies and privileges with which it was inſeparably interwoven, as not to poſſeſs vigour and energy within itſelf to get rid of them, however conſcious the whole community avowed themſelves of the neceſſity of it; then he would probably have formed to himſelf a very different concluſion. He would have ſeen the government of ſuch a country, not as likely to fall a prey to foreign enemies; he would not have viewed it at the feet of a conqueror, but he would have deſcribed it as likely to fall a ſacrifice to the belief of its incapacity which uniformly pervaded the community.

If in the evils attending this new ſyſtem of providing for the wants of the ſtate, we can trace the cauſe of this extraordinary event, our wonder and ſurpriſe at the faci-

lity and eaſe with which it was effected will alſo in a degree vaniſh ; when we conſider the enormity of the evil under which France laboured, and which its government had myſteriouſly concealed till the annual extent of the defalcation of the revenue was ſo great, that the dread of the increaſing difficulties which it foreſaw, could on the one hand no longer permit it to palliate; and on the other, in its cramped, weak, and enervated ſtate, it was equally unfit to meet the creditor with a refuſal, or the public with a demand.

He whoſe habits of vice and diſſipation have brought ruin upon himſelf, when reduced to diſtreſs, may take to the highway; but in attempting to get forcibly the pittance with which he means to purchaſe his daily bread, a ſtruggle will enſue: the merchant whoſe ſuppoſed opulence has ſecured an ex-

 tenſive

tenſive credit, though he may have long known the ſituation of his affairs, though he may have foreſeen that he was about to involve hundreds in ruin, when the hour of bankruptcy comes, diſappears from the Exchange, and is permitted quietly to retreat.

The neceſſities of the court of Charles the Firſt, to adminiſter to its momentary expences, induced them to attempt forcibly the levying of illegal exactions; hiſtory informs us of the ſtruggle that enſued. The neceſſities of the court of Lewis the Sixteenth, occaſioned by the embarraſſment in a great and complicated ſyſtem of finance in which it was involved, when the hour of reckoning came, exhibited to mankind a ſtriking proof that the Exchange is not the moſt important ſituation from whence, in the moment of ſimilar calamity, a quiet and peaceable retreat may be made. Betwixt the

the affairs of individuals and national concerns, there is always ſome reſemblance, ſome analogy, to be traced.

Though the cauſes are various to which you may attribute the ſcenes that immediately followed the diſſolution of the old government;—though that love of liberty which inſtantly ſhone forth and diſcovered itſelf, and which ſeemed to guide at firſt all their proceedings, may be traced as ariſing from the general diffuſion of knowledge which prevailed, from the habits of admiring the effects of freedom, which even the Court itſelf had endeavoured to excite, when in America, as in Holland, it protected the cauſe of democracy; and from writings on the ſubject, which, during that period, had been not only permitted but encouraged;—yet it is to the operation of the exceſs of this funding ſyſtem on the

vicious frame of the French Monarchy, which you may excluſively attribute the diſſolution of the old government, and its perfect incapacity to proceed. For if we were for a moment to fancy that greater energy had been diſplayed in its defence, that the armed force which ſurrounded Paris had been brought to act, and that the Aſſembly had by their means been diſmiſſed, there is no one who can think, that, when it had diſguſted the people at large, perhaps embrued its hands in their blood, that government would have poſſeſſed influence ſufficient to extricate itſelf from difficulties which it antecedently had not courage to face.

There is no one can reaſonably conjecture that this would have had any other effect than retarding the hour of the calamity, or perhaps accelerating thoſe ſcenes of

of horror which mankind have ſince had ſo much reaſon to regret.

France now exhibited a new ſcene to the eyes of mankind, the firſt great victim to the raſh and improvident management of this modern ſyſtem of Finance. We ſaw, not in an infant nation, but amongſt a people, who, in ſpite of the drawback under which they had laboured from the nature of their government, had ſtood the foremoſt in civilization, and in the cultivation of the arts and ſciences, every trace of its government deſtroyed. We ſaw all the political inſtitutions of a nation palſied and annihilated, who are well deſcribed by a modern Philoſopher, when he ſays, "The French are the only people, "except the Greeks, who have been at "once Philoſophers, Poets, Orators, Hiſto-"rians, Painters, Architects, Sculptors, and

" Muſicians. With regard to the Stage
" they had excelled even the Greeks, who
" far excelled the Engliſh; and in common
" life they have in a great meaſure perfect-
" ed that Art, the moſt uſeful and agree-
" able of any, *l'Art de vivre*, the Art of So-
" ciety and Converſation."

The buſy ſcenes in which the people of France were of neceſſity about to be engaged, were but too likely to carry them on in the progreſs, naturally dictated by the ſituation in which the diſſolution of the old government left them. But the ſpeculation of what was likely to enſue did not alone concern them; it required not much foreſight to diſcover how much it was intereſting to the reſt of the world—how much, in particular, it was intereſting to us, who had long been accuſtomed to conſider that country as a rival.

It was a ſubject that demanded the utmoſt attention, as it required the moſt enlarged talents in our ſtateſmen.—It called for the exerciſe of thoſe talents which qualify men for taking a lead in the uncommon and more important ſituations of ſociety; there was here no precedent that could be called in, no official experience that could aid or aſſiſt; "for, when the high roads are "broken up and the waters out, when a "new and troubled ſcene is opened, and "the file affords no precedent; then it is "that a greater knowledge of mankind is "requiſite than office ever gave, or than "office ever can give."

In purſuing this inveſtigation, the path was not however barren; there were many things that tended to aid and aſſiſt the mind;—for though deprived of any experience of a nation, which directly or even

remotely refembled in its ſituation that of France, the conſideration of the manners, of the habits, and of the character of the different claſſes of individuals that formed the community, ſeemed to preſent to us grounds on which to build our ſpeculations.

France, indeed, had loſt its government; but the people of France had not, could not, ſhake off thoſe different modifications of character which under it they had acquired. We ſtill ſaw diſtinctly remaining the various claſſes of the community to which the nature of the old inſtitutions had given riſe;—we ſtill ſaw exiſting in each the habits, the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics, with which the vice or the weakneſs of the ancient government had ſtamped them.

We ſaw in the nobility and clergy that were uſed to ſurround the throne, a claſs of

men corrupted and debaſed by the mode in which they had been educated; by the manner in which they had lived; whoſe fortunes had fallen a victim to the enormous extravagance encouraged by the Court, and who had been ſubſequently maintained in their luxurious habits by the corrupt profuſion of it; and in that deſcription of thoſe two orders, who, remote from the Court, lived in the different provinces, we beheld men practiced in the exerciſe of that little village-tyranny, which their ſuperiority had authorized; accuſtomed to enjoy thoſe exemptions and privileges on which they habitually prided themſelves, and which taught them to regard thoſe beneath them as almoſt a different claſs of beings *.

We

* In the *Cahiers* of the nobility, at the time of the States General, we find them ſteadily demanding, that all their feudal rights ſhould be confirmed: that the carrying of arms ſhould be ſtrictly prohibited to every body,

We ſaw in thoſe who compoſed the different Parliaments a proud magiſtracy, who, though their ambition and the neceſſities of the ſtate had led them every where to oppoſe the fiſcal oppreſſions of the Court, loved the conſequence they enjoyed, and looked with ſatisfaction at that excluſive privilege of adminiſtering juſtice or injuſtice

body, but noblemen: that the infamous arrangements of the militia ſhould remain on its old footing: that breaking up parks, and incloſing commons, ſhould be prohibited: that the nobility alone ſhould be eligible to enter into the army, church, &c. that lettres de cachet ſhould continue: that the preſs ſhould not be free: and in fine, that there ſhould be no free corn trade. Thoſe of the clergy maintain that the liberty of the preſs ought rather to be reſtrained than extended: that the laws againſt it ſhould be renewed and executed: that admiſſion into religious orders ſhould be, as formerly, at ſixteen years of age: that lettres de cachet are uſeful, and even neceſſary. They ſolicit to prohibit all diviſion of commons, and to revoke the edict allowing incloſures.

over

over his people which they had purchaſed from the Sovereign.

In the middling orders of ſociety we ſaw many, who had acquired affluence by the commerce in which they had been engaged, averſe to the old ſyſtem, from the reſtraints which, by its improvident laws, they had laboured under in the conduct of their profeſſion,—as well as from a recollection of the little perſonal eſtimation in which, under it, they were held.—In this claſs we alſo found the diſciples of Voltaire, Rouſſeau, Mably, Turgot, and the economiſts, a ſet of men, the pupils of thoſe who had enlightened the world with their ſpeculations; amongſt whom the principles of political economy had been long better underſtood, and more thoroughly digeſted, than they were in any other nation; who had by their various publications tinged the mind of the whole

whole community with an idea of liberty which their habits rendered them incapable of digeſting.

In the lower orders, which bore in numbers an infinitely greater proportion to the others than it happily does in this country where property is diffuſed, we ſaw human nature in an abject ſituation indeed! a people devoid of all property, who looked alone to the labour of their hands for their daily ſupport, and who were in many inſtances robbed of a great proportion of the pittance they could earn, that no encroachments might be made upon the exemptions and privileges of the other orders, in providing for the wants of the ſtate, and the luxuriant corruption of its court; a people rendered in their nature cruel, by the habitual want of feeling they had experienced on the part of their ſuperiors; and ſavage, from

from the oppreſſion to which their minds had ſo long been trained *.

Such

* Though I could give many inſtances of the miſery of the lower orders in France from my own knowledge, and refer to eloquent paſſages in the works of the writers of that country, deſcriptive of the ſad ſituation to which they were reduced, I chooſe to confine myſelf to the following extracts from the works of Mr. Arthur Young, which, as they were recommended by Mr. Reeves and his aſſociation, may be ſuppoſed to furniſh that increaſed conviction the mind feels, when it extracts a fact from an unwilling witneſs.

Country-labour being 76 per cent. cheaper in France than in England, it may be inferred, that all thoſe claſſes which depend on labour, and are the moſt numerous in ſociety, are 76 per cent. leſs at their eaſe (if I may uſe the expreſſion), worſe fed, worſe cloathed, and worſe ſupported both in ſickneſs and in health, than the ſame claſſes in England, notwithſtanding the immenſe quantity of precious metals, and the impoſing appearance of wealth in France.

Walking up a long hill to eaſe my mare, I was joined by a poor woman, who complained of the times, and that

it

Such were the component parts of this great nation, who ſaw proſtrate at their feet, from

it was a ſad country; on my demanding her reaſons, ſhe ſaid, her huſband had but a morſel of land, one cow, and a poor little horſe, yet he had a franchar (42lb.) of wheat, and three chickens, to pay as a quit-rent to one ſeigneur; and four franchar of oats, one chicken, and 1 ſ. to pay to another, beſide very heavy tailles and other taxes. She had ſeven children, and the cow's milk helped to make the ſoup. It was ſaid at preſent, that *ſomething was to be done by ſome great folks for ſuch poor ones, but ſhe did not know who or how; but God ſend us better, car les tailles & les droits nous écraſent.* This woman at no great diſtance might have been taken for ſixty or ſeventy, her figure was ſo bent, and her face ſo furrowed and hardened by labour; but ſhe ſaid, ſhe was only twenty-eight. An Engliſhman, who has not travelled, cannot imagine the figure made by infinitely the greater part of the country women in France; it ſpeaks, at firſt ſight, hard and ſevere labour; I am inclined to think, that they work harder than the men, and this, united with the more miſerable labour of bringing a new race of ſlaves into the world, deſtroys abſolutely all ſymmetry of perſon, and every feminine appearance.

from the cauſes I have detailed, without any great or proportionable exertion of their own, all

ance. To what are we to attribute this difference in the manners of the lower people in the two kingdoms? *To Government.*

The murder of a Seigneur, or a chateau in flames, is recorded in every newſpaper; the rank of the perſon who ſuffers, attracts notice; but where do we find the regiſter of that Seigneur's oppreſſion of his peaſantry, and his exactions of feudal ſervices, from thoſe whoſe children were dying around them for want of bread? Where do we find the minutes that aſſigned theſe ſtarving wretches to ſome vile petty-fogger, to be fleeced by impoſitions, and a mockery of juſtice, in the ſeigneurial courts? Who gives us the awards of the intendant and his *ſub-delegues*, which took off the taxes of a man of faſhion, and laid them with accumulated weight on the poor, who were ſo unfortunate as to be his neighbours? Who has dwelt ſufficiently upon explaining all the ramification of deſpotiſm, regal, ariſtocratical, and eccleſiaſtical, pervading the whole maſs of the people; reaching, like a circulating fluid, the moſt

all the laws and inſtitutions under which they had lived.

What

moſt diſtant capillary tubes of poverty and wretchedneſs? In theſe caſes, the ſufferers are too ignoble to be known, and the maſs too indiſcriminate to be pitied.

What are we to think of demanding, as a favour, the permiſſion——"*de nettoyer ſes grains, de faucher les prés artificiels, & d'enlever ſes chanmes ſans égard pour la perdrix ou tout autre gibier?*"—An Engliſh reader will ſcarcely underſtand it, without being told, that there were numerous edicts for preſerving the game, which prohibited weeding and hoeing, leſt the young partridges ſhould be diſturbed; ſteeping ſeed, leſt it ſhould injure the game; manuring with night ſoil, leſt the flavour of the partridges ſhould be injured by feeding on the corn ſo produced; mowing hay, &c. before a certain time, ſo late as to ſpoil many crops; and taking away the ſtubble, which would deprive the birds of ſhelter.

BERRY.—*Argentan.*—They pay rent for a cottage 20 livres, get their fuel in the woods; their tailles 15 to 24 ſous: as much for capitation, and do ſix days labour in the roads.

ST.

What was to happen no one could accurately predict, it would have required the

St. George.—They eat buck-wheat made in very thin cakes without leaven.

Pellecoy.—Poor women picking weeds into their aprons to feed their cows with, and something like this I have remarked, more or less, all the way from Calais; it conveys an idea of poverty and want of employment.

Falaise.—Live very badly, much of the bread is barley and buck-wheat, and many have nothing else, but this and water, unless cyder happens to be very cheap; their fuel what wood they can steal.

Morlaix to Brest.—The people of the country are all dressed in great trowsers like breeches, many of them with naked legs, and most with wooden shoes; the women seemed from their persons and features to be harder worked than horses.

Lyons.—A room for a manufacturer 200 to 300 livres, and house rent of all sorts very dear; 20,000 people are now (1790) starving: yet charities of all sorts do not amount to less than a million of livres a year.

gift of prophecy, and far exceeds the narrow bounds of the intellect of man. To have foreſeen the eſtabliſhment of the Conſtitution of 1789;—the Revolution that enſued in Auguſt 1792;—the attempt to eſtabliſh a republic, and to conduct the government by means of the intellectual powers alternately operating on the paſſions and the reaſon of man;—the ſubſequent dominion of anarchy, the cruelties that attended it;—and the extent of the emigrations that during theſe different changes would take place, was impoſſible.

But an analyſis of the elements of which this ſociety was formed, might have convinced any one, that to the debaſed minds of many incapable of bearing the ſad reverſe of fortune, of viewing the ſcenes which brought to their recollection their former power and ſplendour, emigration would

would naturally preſent itſelf as a reſource; —that if a government was to be formed by the joint efforts of the nobility and clergy that remained, and the middling orders whom the ſcene had brought forward, it would naturally partake of a limited monarchy; that as the influence of name and nobility gradually diſappeared, the efforts of the middling orders, from their averſion to any thing that approximated to the ancient ſyſtem, as well as from the nature of the opinions which in theory they had been accuſtomed to hold, would make them reliſh, and induce their leaders to attempt the eſtabliſhing a republic; and that, laſtly, habituated to nothing but change, the paſſions and ambition of the lower orders, broke looſe from all reſtraint, ſhould produce ſomething like that extraordinary ſcene of which we have all been witneſſes.

The progreſs was natural, and, even if there had been no interference of external force, it ſeemed to flow from the nature and character of thoſe who were unfortunately concerned, and the ſituation in which they were left. To anticipate the ſcenes of horror, which of neceſſity muſt have enſued in this laſt ſtage of the buſineſs, was that from which moſt would naturally revolt, but there were none who forced themſelves to it that could reaſonably doubt of the extent to which they would arrive.—The uninformed man who never ſaw power exerciſed, but with a view to the benefit of him who poſſeſſed it;—when he acquires it, regards it naturally as the privilege to play the tyrant. The cruelties and oppreſſions of men broke looſe from the chains of power, are always in proportion to the weight of the chains with which they have been loaded. A mob in London generally

nerally terminates with the breaking of a few windows, or at moſt, with the deſtruction of a few houſes. An inſurrection amongſt the negroes in the Weſt Indies ends in the murder of the ſlave-drivers, too often in that of the planter's whole family.

We ought not, we cannot juſtly, aſcribe to the new ſyſtem thoſe ſcenes which have ſo often diſguſted us; to contemplate it is a taſk ſhocking to humanity; but conſtrained to it, the diſcerning eye diſcovers alone the natural conſequences of the vicious abſurdity of the old ſyſtem. Its enormities afford a ſtandard by which you may accurately commenſurate the ſad extent of the oppreſſion over the poor, which under the ancient monarchy of France was exerciſed.

It is this reaſoning, it is this analyſis of the cauſes of the French Revolution, and of

the horrors it has occaſioned. It is the reflection, that there exiſted in our finance the utmoſt proſperity, and with good management no chance of their getting into that ſtate of diſorder which produced the Revolution in France, that has always convinced me that there could be no natural tendency to a ſimilar ſituation in this country.

It is the conviction, that at all events the ſcenes of that unrelenting love of blood that attended it, which ſeemed to be the legitimate offſpring of its government, of thoſe racks and Baſtilles that it looked to, to ſupport its power, never could be generated under the influence of the mild ſpirit of our Laws, and the wiſe regulation of our Conſtitution, which quieted all alarms in my mind upon that ſubject.

It is this mode of conſidering the ſubject, however, that has long convinced me of the progreſſive tendency that things had in France to the ſituation in which they now are; and that would have led me—if I had thought that we could ever have a right to interfere in the internal regulations of another government, if I could have loſt ſight of that right which exiſts in every community to form laws and inſtitutions for its interior regulation, that principle upon which the independence of nations reſts—if ever I could have foreſeen the moment when views of expediency would have ſanctioned the interference of this country for ſuch a purpoſe,—to applaud the wiſdom of thoſe who wiſhed to call us into the field at an early period, to criticiſe the folly of thoſe who put off interfering, till the moment in which this country took a part. To deſtroy it at its birth might have

been, perhaps, an eaſy, if a deſirable taſk; we know what it is to cope with it when its giant ſtrength has reached to maturity.

But the ſyſtem which this country wiſely at firſt purſued, permitted it not to think that it could have a right, that the time could ever arrive when it would be expedient, to interfere.

In the moſt authentic and ſolemn mode in which the opinions of thoſe who conducted the government could be declared, in his Majeſty's ſpeeches from the Throne, we had the happineſs to ſee the right of interference diſclaimed; the expediency of it reprobated; the proſpect of our continuing in peace held out with ſatisfaction; and the hope of the general peace of Europe, wiſely ſtated to us as a commercial nation, as if it

deeply concerned our intereſts. In its increaſing riches the country felt the benefit of this conduct; in the happineſs which they enjoyed, the people felt the bleſſings of it; in the tendency which it had to preſerve in the minds of foreign powers that idea of conſequence we had acquired by our ſtruggle againſt ſo many nations during the latter period of the American war, mankind ſaw the policy of it; the nation univerſally marked it with their approbation, and they were apparently as unanimous for maintaining it as ever they have been for the war—in reality much more ſo.

That ſyſtem has been however abandoned; and, at a late period, we have been plunged into a war, the object of which, as the fermentation of the public opinion ſeemed likely to ſympathize with it, has ſucceſſively been ſtated:—firſt, to be the ſecurity

curity of Holland, the maintenance of treaties relative to the navigation of the Scheldt, and the repeal of the decree of the 19th November;—next, compenſation for the paſt, and ſecurity for the future; and laſtly, the deſtruction of that ſyſtem of government or anarchy that prevails in France: and this is now held out as neceſſary even to inſure our exiſtence as a people.

Had we continued to confine ourſelves to any of the two firſt objects, I ſhould have here thought it neceſſary, before calling your attention to the probable conſequences which would have reſulted from perſevering in that ſyſtem in which we firſt embarked, or from adopting that ſyſtem which we are now purſuing, to have ſtated to you ſome ideas concerning the origin of the war. The firſt blow ſufficiently denotes

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the firſt act of aggreſſion; but it by no means points out who, in the ſpirit of the law of nations, is the aggreſſor. When I conſider, however, that we have now embarked for the avowed purpoſe of *ſaving ourſelves*, by deſtroying the prevalent ſyſtem in France; when I learn from that conſideration, that as ſelf-preſervation neceſſarily calls forth activity, war muſt at all events have inevitably been reſolved upon in the breaſts of thoſe who could entertain this idea; and that we ſhould of courſe have been now in the ſame ſituation whatever line of conduct France had purſued, unleſs ſhe had given up that ſyſtem of interior management which it is our object to deſtroy, I ſhould think I was engaging you in an irrelevant and unprofitable enquiry.

In ſtating to you the advantages that would have attended our having remained

at peace, I ſhall be cautious to ſay nothing that reaſon does not authorize; I will not give ſcope to my imagination; I feel the ſtrength of my argument too much to think it requires it; I ſhould weaken it in my own eſtimation by riſking the chance of raiſing ſuſpicions in your minds were I to indulge it. And I cannot but feel, that it would be unfair to arraign the judgment of thoſe who have brought on the war, by ſuppoſing that it was practicable for them to foreſee the unfortunate events that have enſued, or the enormous expence into which we have been led. I will do them the juſtice to ſay, that I do not believe there exiſt many individuals, who, if they could have foreſeen all that has happened, and viewed the proſpects which we now poſſeſs, would have given way either to views of intereſt or feelings of alarm, to ſuch a degree as to prevent their ſupporting the motion

tion of Mr. Fox on the 18th December, 1792, which might have happily ſecured to the country a chance of accommodating the then ſubſiſting differences.

At the time we embarked in the war, we had experience of the advantages which our trade and commerce had derived from peace, and of the national proſperity that had enſued from our perſeverance in it. And if the impoveriſhed ſtate of the people of thoſe countries, who had antecedently engaged in hoſtilities, had diminiſhed in certain inſtances the demand for our manufactures in ſome of thoſe markets to which they uſed to be carried, whilſt it exhibited to our eyes a picture of the conſequences attending war, from which we might have benefited, the eſtimation in which we were held afforded a reaſonable proſpect of our being able, by mediation, to check the evil

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if it became important; and by reſtoring peace to Europe, to ſtop the growth of that habit of the love of military glory and enterpriſe, which was entwined with the exiſtence of the monarchy of France, though under the new ſyſtem it had not as yet had time thoroughly to take root. If unfortunately we had not ſucceeded in immediately reſtoring general peace, we had at all events the advantage, from the neglect which had pervaded the commerce of other countries, in conſequence of the confuſion in which they were involved, of, in a manner, monopolizing the trade of Europe. If the ſale of ſome of our manufactures was likely to be reduced, it was probable that in others it would be much augmented;—the demand for the pottery of Staffordſhire might have been diminiſhed; but the looms of Yorkſhire and Lancaſhire, and the furnaces of Birmingham, were, from the ſituation of

of Europe, ſure of increaſed employment; and the receipts of the country, on the whole, were likely to be much extended.—If hoſtilities were perſevered in by the other powers of Europe, we had the proſpect of at leaſt enjoying that ſatisfaction which would ariſe from ſeeing our riches and our reſources increaſing, and our debts diminiſhing; whilſt thoſe of our rival were laviſhed in unproductive expenditure, and her people loſing the habits of productive labour. The nature of the warfare in which France was engaged, as it involved her in great expence, and furniſhed no employment for her navy, held out no ill-grounded hope of a general neglect in her marine department; and the extinction of her commerce annihilating in a degree the nurſery for her ſeamen, taught us to flatter ourſelves, that by perſevering in peace we ſhould ſee our only rival on the ſea gradually

dually loſe the means and the habit of diſplaying her ſtrength on that element, and offered to us at once the pleaſing and the proud proſpect of being able to maintain the dominion of the ocean with increaſed certainty and diminiſhed expence.

When the hour of general peace arrived, we had, by purſuing this line, the happineſs to foreſee that the increaſe of our capital, the diminution of our debt, and conſequently of our taxes—the habits of induſtry which we muſt have acquired, the improvement in machinery, which time, ingenuity, and enterpriſe inſure, would have enabled us to maintain our commercial ſuperiority, and to meet in every market in the world our old rival, even though from the diminution and equalization of her taxes, from the additional energy of her new government, and from the enjoyment of

of liberty ever propitious to commerce, ſhe ſhould ſtart with advantages the effects of which we had not heretofore experienced. —And by thus increaſing our induſtry and opulence, by extending our commerce, we were led with certainty to anticipate its effects in raiſing our importance abroad, whilſt, by the wealth and happineſs enjoyed at home, it was equally certain fundamentally to eſtabliſh the love of our conſtitution in the heart of every man. For "Periſh our commerce, let our conſtitution "ſurvive *!" involves a paradox that it would be treating your underſtandings with contempt to inveſtigate.

If, in contemplating our proſpects in remaining at peace, this pleaſing picture preſented itſelf to our eye; in viewing the pro-

* A ſentiment advanced by authority in the Houſe of Commons.

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bable events and conſequences of warfare, we ſaw all thoſe calamities which uſually attend that ſituation, and which to us, who depend ſo much on our manufactures and our commerce, is more dreadful than it can be to any other nation.

We had a ſure and certain proſpect of the increaſe of our national debt, which had been augmented during the American war to a ſum that at the moment ſeemed to threaten us with deſtruction,—to a ſum which threw ridicule on the limited ideas of thoſe who had antecedently ſpeculated on the ſubject *, and taught man to doubt whether the world was not as yet too much in its infancy to furniſh materials, on which to build our reaſoning on matters of political œconomy.—We had indeed been enabled, by the increaſe of opulence which we de-

* Hume's Eſſay on Public Credit, Note annexed to it.

rived

rived from the induſtry and ingenuity of our manufacturers, as well as from the aid and aſſiſtance to labour, and the variety of its effects, which the ingenious application of mechaniſm and chemiſtry in the conduct of our manufactures had fortunately for this country produced, to diſcharge during peace the intereſt of our enormous debt, and even to make proviſion for the reduction of it. — But all were convinced of the diſadvantage under which we laboured, in having ſo large a part of our wealth employed in unproductive uſes; and there were none who did not look forward with alarm, who did not dread the conſequences of thus burying any larger proportion of our productive capital.

We could not but foreſee the temporary diminution of our trade, from the natural tendency that war has, both abroad and at home, to diminiſh the demand for our manu-

factures; and the disadvantage that would arise from diverting the hands and the habits of so many of our industrious manufacturers from productive to unproductive labour, could not for a moment escape our observation.

But before we became enamoured of, and ultimately resolved upon, this system, the circumstances of the times, the situation of the nation with which we were going to contest, led naturally to anticipate in the present warfare, the hour of more than usual calamity.

We saw that we were about to engage in an unequal contest. Ours was a government that, in estimating its resources, could not totally lose sight of the happiness and prosperity of the people over which it ruled. —Theirs was a government that found re-

ſources in robbery and murder, whoſe means of expenditure were alone to be eſtimated by the extent of the property of the nation, and the number of whoſe warriors could alone be limited in our imaginations by the number of which the community conſiſted.

Our military experience, and that of our allies, the circumſtance of almoſt all thoſe having retired from France who poſſeſſed experience in the art of war, gave us indeed a reaſonable ground to expect a temporary ſucceſs. But whilſt reaſon, general principle and experience, taught us to ridicule the idea that courage belonged peculiarly to any nation, or was excluſively the effect of any particular climate;—it was difficult to ſee why ſuperiority of capital, and the extended application of labour ariſing from the number of hands they could command, ſhould

not in war, as in other trades, enſure ſucceſs *.

When we viewed the aſſertion made on plauſible and good grounds, in Sir James

* The following extract of a letter from the Duke of York, publiſhed in the Gazette ſince this was written, ſeems ſtrongly to confirm this opinion:

"The hazard of an action with ſuch a very great "diſparity of numbers, could not but become a matter "of the moſt ſerious conſideration; and, after the moſt "mature deliberation, I did not think myſelf at liberty "to riſk, in ſo unequal a conteſt, his Majeſty's troops, "or thoſe of his allies ſerving with them. I had the "utmoſt reliance on their courage and diſcipline, and I "had no doubt but that theſe would have enabled me to "reſiſt the firſt efforts of the enemy; but it could "ſcarcely be expected that even by the utmoſt exertion "of theſe qualities they would be able to withſtand the "reiterated attacks, which the vaſt ſuperiority of the "enemy would enable them to make, and which we "know, from experience, is a general principle upon "which they act."

Stuart's

Stuart's Political Œconomy, how much reaſon had we to be alarmed!

" Were any prince in Europe, whoſe ſub-
" jects I ſhall ſuppoſe may amount to ſix
" millions of inhabitants, one half employed
" in agriculture, the other half employed
" in trade and induſtry, or living upon a
" revenue already acquired; were ſuch a
" prince, I ſay, ſuppoſed to have autho-
" rity ſufficient to engage his people to
" adopt a new plan of œconomy, calculated
" to ſecure them againſt the deſigns of a pow-
" erful neighbour, who, I ſhall ſuppoſe, has
" formed ſchemes of invading and ſubduing
" them: let him engage the whole proprie-
" tors of lands to renounce their ſeveral poſſeſ-
" ſions; or, if that ſuppoſition ſhould ap-
" pear too abſurd, let him contract debts to
" the value of the whole property of the
" nation; let the land tax be impoſed at
" twenty ſhillings in the pound, and then

" let him become bankrupt to his creditors.
" —Let the income of all the lands be col-
" lected throughout the country for the uſe
" of the State; let all the luxurious arts be
" proſcribed; and let thoſe employed in them
" be formed, under the command of the for-
" mer land proprietors, into a body of regu-
" lar troops, officers and ſoldiers, provided
" with every thing neceſſary for their main-
" tenance, and that of their wives and fami-
" lies, at the public expence. Let me carry
" the ſuppoſition further. Let every ſu-
" perfluity be cut off; let the peaſants be
" enſlaved, and obliged to labour the ground
" with no view of profit to themſelves, but
" for ſimple ſubſiſtence; let the uſe of gold
" and ſilver be proſcribed, and let all theſe
" metals be ſhut up in a public treaſure.
" Let no foreign trade, and very little do-
" meſtic, be encouraged; but let every
" man willing to ſerve as a ſoldier be re-
" ceived and taken care of; and thoſe who

" either

" either incline to be idle, or who are found
" ſuperfluous, be ſent out of the country.
" I aſk what combination, among the mo-
" dern European princes, would carry on a
" ſucceſsful war againſt ſuch a people? What
" article would be wanting to their eaſe,
" that is, to their ample ſubſiſtence?"

We could not but reflect that we were about to engage with a nation more emphatically in the ſituation he deſcribes, than it was poſſible for man antecedently to imagine could have exiſted;—with a nation where the only difference ſeemed to be, that it conſiſted on the loweſt calculation of twenty-five millions of inhabitants, and enjoyed a degree of opulence proportionate to its extended territory.

The propoſal made by France, to give to maritime commerce the ſame protection which the law of nations ſecures to private property

property by land *, had been by us treated with contempt; but we could not now be blind to the ſituation of our commerce, and of theirs; to the little opportunity which preſented itſelf to us of injuring them, to the extenſive damages which from them in our ſituation we might ſuſtain. It could not eſcape us, that our interference would naturally draw their attention to their marine; and we had then, as we have now, juſt reaſon to dread the conſequences that their unlimited exertions, both in expence and labour, added to their ſuperior ſkill in ſhipbuilding, would enable them to make.

* See Note preſented by Chauvelin to Lord Grenville, dated 25th July 1792.

"In conformity to the expreſs orders of his Court, "the underſigned Miniſter Plenipotentiary of the King "of the French has the honour to tranſmit a copy of "a miniſterial diſpatch of the 13th of June, relative "to meaſures to be taken by the Maritime Powers for "the abolition of privateering."

At

At the commencement of the American war, the probability of the conteſt had been long foreſeen; the trade of our merchants was more limited;—they had time to arrange their affairs, and their ſituation enabled them to do it with eaſe:—but here the change of ſyſtem was about to be ſo ſudden, the trade of the country was ſo great, the paper credit ſo extended, that we could not but anticipate the ſhock we were likely to give to our commerce, the riſque we ran of giving a vital blow to the commercial credit of our country.

Whilſt theſe calamities naturally preſented themſelves to the mind of the man who reaſoned upon the ſubject, it was impoſſible to extract from the imaginations of thoſe whoſe ſanguine folly had made them conceited about their views of ideal ſucceſs, a prophecy of any event which reaſonably afforded proſpects of advantage, or even of

indemnity for the ſure loſs we were to ſuſtain.

When we were told that their ſettlements in the Eaſt, their colonies in the Weſt, would fall an eaſy prey, it readily occurred to *our minds*, that though the acquiſition in the Eaſt Indies might have appeared formerly of great uſe, inſomuch as it would have diſabled France from carrying on thoſe intrigues amongſt the native powers which had ſo often diſturbed the peace of India, and involved us in war,—that now, when ſhe had withdrawn in a degree her attention from that quarter, and was completely engroſſed by the war on the Continent, and her ſituation at home, it could alone be eſtimated by the value and extent of the territory we acquired,—and that in this view it could form but a trifling article on the creditor ſide of the account. And whilſt the extent of the advantages attending the

acquiſition

acquiſition of the Weſt Indies preſents to the mind, if they could be retained, a very difficult object of political enquiry, eſtimated even by the moſt ſanguine, it could appear but a poor compenſation for the calamities that might enſue.

When we were told, with a degree of folly which was well deſcribed as throwing ridicule on the attempt of Cervantes to paint a diſordered imagination *, that the exertions of the force we were likely to combine againſt her would enſure the conqueſt of France, even that was a thing which we could not ſeriouſly contemplate without alarm; for, whichever plan we looked at as likely to be purſued in conſequence of it, the proſpect ſeemed equally gloomy; we could not help foreſeeing more of calamity than chance of indemnification, whether we anticipated the deſtruction of the balance

* See Mr. Fox's Letter to the Electors of Weſtminſter.

of

of power in Europe by the partition of France, or the neceſſity of maintaining the authority of any government which by force we might eſtabliſh over it.

Poſſeſſed of a form of government which we all loved and admired, it was with juſt dread and alarm that we ſaw the progreſs of the practice of the government of one country interfering by force in the interior arrangements of another: the conduct of the Northern Powers with regard to Poland had with juſtice diſguſted the nation;—and as the doctrine made ſtrides, as the ſcenes of its exertion approached nearer to us, if the prudence of our interfering to put an end to it could be doubted by any, the folly of our giving it ſanction by adopting it ourſelves was apparent to all; it was to check the principle of the right of interference that we were alone intereſted, and it ſignified not to us, whether the attempt was made on the

part

part of the preponderant members of the Germanic body, to deluge France with blood in endeavouring to reſtore the authority of its monarch againſt his own and his people's inclination;—or on the part of the Jacobins to affiliate the people of Bruſſels with the ſword, and attempt by force what they called the emancipation of mankind. The ſpirit of our happy Conſtitution was fortunately as little congenial to the principles of the one, as of the other; and it mattered not to us which of the political cruſaders ſucceeded in their enterpriſe. For we could not forget, that if the Jacobins, when they talked of the monarchical part of our government, inſulted our ears by ridiculing what they impiouſly termed a *tigre couronné*;—the conſpirators of Pilnitz liſtened with joy to the ridicule of any ſhare of power being poſſeſſed by what, with equal impiety, was termed *The Repreſentatives of the Swiniſh Multitude.*

To

To interfere with our mediation might have prevented the melancholy extent of the evil;—to interfere as a party unavoidably tended to increaſe it. If after every attempt to negotiate, to avoid by every peaceable exertion the calamity, we had been reduced to the unfortunate neceſſity of engaging, reaſon would have taught us to regret the diſaſter: but to plunge headlong into the calamity, without taking advantage of the various opportunities that preſented themſelves of avoiding it;—without endeavouring anxiouſly to wave all the little formalities and punctilios that might ſtand in our way in the courſe of attempting by treaty to ſhun it, is a line which crooked policy or paſſion may have led us to adopt, which reaſon never could have permitted us to approve.

Such is the view of the ſubject that ſuggeſted

geſted doubts of the prudence of the ſyſtem at its commencement, that has led me to maintain thoſe doubts during its progreſs, and that now makes me look back with regret at every opportunity of endeavouring, by negotiation, to ſecure or reſtore the peace of Europe, which we have neglected —that makes me regret, that when in July 1792 France ſolicited our mediation, and our allies hardly could have refuſed it, we thought proper not to interfere, on account of the formality of all the parties concerned not having applied to us, and the averſion we then ſo ſtrongly expreſſed to taking a part in the internal affairs of another country*—that makes me lament, that in Au-

* It is not eaſy to underſtand how our interference for the purpoſe of mediation, the thing M. Chauvelin ſolicited, could be ſtated by Lord Grenville to be inconſiſtent with the rights and the independence of the allies. —See Lord Grenville's Letter to M. Chauvelin, Whitehall, July 8, 1792.

guſt 1792 we thought it neceſſary to recall our Miniſter from Paris:—a ſtep which, if we look at the conduct of the European Powers in the revolution in the Netherlands—during the Commonwealth or at the revolution in England—during all the various revolutions in the Conſtitutions of Denmark, Sweden, Bohemia, and Hungary, the practice of former times ſeems not to vindicate, and to which our own conduct in the recent revolutions of Poland and Flanders gives no countenance:—a ſtep, the prudence of which it will be difficult to defend, when we conſider that there never was a time in which we ſhould ſo anxiouſly have wiſhed for information of the interior ſituation of France; or in which, upon an enlarged view of our intereſts, it ſeemed ſo deſirable for us, by well-judged interpoſition, amicably to put an end to the war in which ſhe was engaged.

But above all I muſt ſincerely regret, that in December 1792, when every ſort of ſecurity was offered to Holland; when an explanation of the decree of the 19th December was given, which it will be difficult for thoſe who have ſince united Corſica to the Crown of England to arraign; when opening the navigation of the Scheldt ſeemed the only point in diſpute—that we did not adopt the motion of Mr. Fox, as a prelude to a negotiation; and that we ſhould have conſidered the punctilio, whether we ſhould treat with an acknowledged Miniſter or ſecret Agent, to be of importance ſufficient for us to ſacrifice to it all chance of amicable arrangement.

It is this view of the ſubject, coupled with a ſenſe of the calamities we have ſuffered, and the ſituation in which we now ſtand, that creates in my mind much ſorrow that

we treated with contempt the offer made us in April 1793 *, as well as another propoſal which was ſubſequently made in the autumn of the ſame year;—that we did not avail ourſelves of the means which the expulſion of the French from Flanders, and the deſertion of Dumourier in May 1793, gave us of propoſing terms to them;—or of that opportunity we ſince poſſeſſed from our temporary advantages on the Continent, and our ſucceſſes in the Weſt Indies, of

* See Le Brun's Letters, dated April 2, 1793, communicated to Lord Grenville through Mr. Salter, Notary Public.

Though the commencing a treaty through the medium of a Notary is undoubtedly novel, we ought to conſider that it was difficult at the time to deviſe a mode of communication.—And a knowledge of French habits teaches us, that they naturally annex to this mode of proceeding much more ſerious formality than it conveys to an Engliſh ear.—When the Parliament of Paris were refuſed acceſs to the King, we find them taking a proteſt before a Notary.

offering

offering what to them muſt in reaſon have appeared advantageous terms.

Were I diſpoſed to flatter myſelf, that in reviewing all thoſe ſcenes, that in peruſing what I have ſtated to you in defence of the meaſures I have uniformly ſupported, you may have found any thing which has induced you to heſitate, or doubt whether they may not be founded in truth; and whether, if that line of conduct had been adopted to which they would have naturally led, it might not have tended to the preſervation of peace, and the conſequent increaſe of our internal opulence and external importance.—I am however well aware, that before I can have any well-founded hopes of vindicating my conduct in your eſtimation, there is another mode in which the ſubject has been argued, and in which it is neceſſary for me to conſider it.

I have not forgot the cant of the advocate for war. I know on what he has harped. I recollect that the prophecy of deſtruction to the Conſtitution in the event of peace, is the ſpell with which he has enchanted the minds of thoſe who have liſtened to him; that the annihilation of property, and the exiſtence in this country of all thoſe ſcenes of blood which we beheld with horror, is the dreadful threat with which he has ſubdued the minds, and for a moment arreſted the reaſoning faculties, of the community. It was well, it was artfully choſen. In a country, among the inhabitants of which property was more generally and univerſally diffuſed than in any other; where there exiſt few whoſe induſtry has not put them in poſſeſſion of ſomething which they find an intereſt in preſerving;—in a country, the ſpirit of whoſe criminal laws and political inſtitutions had univerſally

univerſally infuſed in the minds of its inhabitants a mild ſpirit of benevolence—it was with certainty you might predict its effect; it was ſure to rouſe the feelings, to influence the paſſions of the people; and when properly wound up, it required no great art and eloquence to guide the mind of the nation, to turn the fury of the moment againſt France, which the people of this country had long been accuſtomed to conſider as a rival, whoſe inhabitants they had long regarded as their natural enemies:—a feeling in a degree ſuſpended, whilſt in forming a limited monarchy *ſhe* ſeemed to pay a juſt tribute to the wiſdom of our Conſtitution, but which now returned with increaſed vigour from a ſenſe of her impertinence, in endeavouring, in her own idea, to lead the way in political improvement, when our prejudices had long confined her talents, and limited her ſway,

to improvement in the ſhape of a gown, or in the formation of a cap.

But, indeed, it was only at the moment we were under the guidance of paſſion that this belief of danger to our Conſtitution could ſpread, that this doctrine of dread of a ſimilar revolution could make its proſelytes: ſo ſoon as reaſon preſided in the mind, the idea of danger was ſure to vaniſh. In the ſituation of the two countries there was not the ſmalleſt ſimilarity. In this country, juſtice was adminiſtered by known rules, and by judges ſkilled in the laws, who held their ſituation for life; in that, it had been a matter of favour and ſolicitation, which was dealt out according to the whim or caprice of thoſe who had purchaſed the privilege *. The people of this

* The adminiſtration of juſtice was partial, venal, infamous. I have, in converſation with many very

country had their repreſentatives, who, though it is anxiouſly to be wiſhed that they were more emphatically the repreſentatives of the people, are even now an important body of men, through whom they can ſtate their grievances. In that country, the people ſaw no body of men who had not an intereſt to conceal and augment the hardſhips under which they laboured, and who were not in the daily practice of con-

ſenſible men, in different parts of the kingdom, met with ſomething of content with their government, in all other reſpects than this: but upon the queſtion of expecting juſtice to be really and fairly adminiſtered, every one confeſſed there was no ſuch thing to be looked for. The conduct of the Parliaments was profligate and atrocious. Upon almoſt every cauſe that came before them, intereſt was openly made with the judges; and woe betided the man who, in a cauſe to ſupport, had no means of conciliating favour, either by the beauty of a handſome wife, or by other methods!—A. YOUNG.

tributing

tributing towards their extent. Here there exiſts a nobility, intermingling with the other orders, by habit and ties of blood every where connected with the community, to whoſe title political power is invariably attached, who, if they had not the inclination, would, in the purſuit of their own intereſts, in the maintaining of their political influence, of neceſſity become habituated to favour and protect thoſe beneath them. There, there exiſted a body of nobility iſolated from the reſt of the ſtate, whoſe title had no political power connected with it, whoſe exiſtence only ſerved by their example to diſcourage induſtry, and whoſe privilege alone conſiſted in the power to oppreſs*. Though we laboured under the

* Beſides the oppreſſion that originated from the extent and inequality of public taxes, the exactions of the Seigneur were enormous. "What," ſays Mr. Young, "are theſe tortures of the peaſantry in Bre-
"tagne,

preſſure of a large debt, we levied without any conſpicuous oppreſſion a revenue equal to the diſcharge of the intereſt, and to a conſiderable annual diminution of the capital. In France, as the national debt increaſed, in conſequence of the privileges and exemptions of the clergy and nobility, the taxes on the people became oppreſſive in a degree beyond which government dreaded to carry it*; and, by

" tagne, which they call chevanchés; quintains;
" ſoul; ſaut de poiſon; baiſer de mariées; tranſporte
" d'œuf ſur un charette; ſilence des grenouilles; corvée
" à miſéricorde; melods; leide; couponage; cartelage;
" barage; fouage; marechauſſée; ban vin; ban d'août;
" trouſſes; gelinage; civerage; taillabiſité; vingtain;
" ſterlage; bordelage; minage; ban de vendanges;
" droit d'accepte!"

* Inſtances, and even groſs ones, have been reported to me in many parts of the kingdom, that made me ſhudder at the oppreſſion to which numbers muſt have been condemned, by the undue favours granted to ſuch

by putting off the evil hour, they at laſt found the deficiency amount to the enormous ſum of upwards of three millions ſterling.—There, in the moment of ſuffering from this

ſuch crooked influence. But, without recurring to ſuch caſes, what muſt have been the ſtate of the poor people paying heavy taxes, from which the Nobility and Clergy were exempted? A cruel aggravation of their miſery, to ſee thoſe who could beſt afford to pay exempted, becauſe able! —The inrollments for the militia, which the Cahiers call injuſtice without example, were another dreadful ſcourge on the peaſantry; and, as married men were exempted from it, occaſioned in ſome degree that miſchievous population, which brought beings into the world in order for little elſe than to be ſtarved. The Corvées, or police of the roads, were annually the ruin of many hundreds of farmers; more than 300 were reduced to beggary, in filling up one vale in Lorain: all theſe oppreſſions fell on the Tiers Etat only; the Nobility and Clergy having been equally exempted from tailles, militia, and corvées. The penal code of finance makes one ſhudder at the horrors of puniſhment inadequate to the crime.—A. YOUNG.

oppreſſion,

oppreſſion, and in this deſperate ſtate of public credit, the people had been inſulted by the profuſion of the Court; they had ſeen in a few years, beſides the debts he contracted, a million ſterling, excluſive of his annual income, laviſhed by a Prince of the blood *. Here, the wiſe regulation of our laws permitted no ſuch improvident expenditure in the miniſters.

Our government was the active theme of praiſe in the mouths of every one;—theirs died a natural death, without exciting the lamentations of any:—in France, it might with truth be ſaid, that the neceſſity of a change had brought about the revolution;—in this country, it was equally true, that the

* In the Red Book produced to the Aſſemblée Conſtituante, the Count D'Artois appears to have received that ſum during the adminiſtration of M. de Calonne.

wanton

wanton love of change could alone generate the idea of one.

There, the great body of the people were more ſubjected to oppreſſion than in any other nation of Europe;—here undoubtedly leſs ſo; and we could not forget that—"*Pour* " *la populace, ce n'eſt jamais par envie d'at-* " *taquer qu'elle ſe ſouleve, mais par impati-* " *ence de ſouffrir* *," is the ſentiment of a great man and a Miniſter of State; that it is the confeſſion of a zealous aſſertor of monarchy.

Paſſion and prejudice are the moſt formidable enemies to the juſt deciſion of all queſtions ſubmitted to the underſtanding; and though unfortunately they have often triumphed, perhaps in no inſtance was their

* Sully's Memoirs.

triumph

triumph ever more conſpicuous, or the dominion which in conſequence of it they excluſively eſtabliſhed over the mind of man, more complete.

Had reaſon been allowed to retain the ſmalleſt ſway, it might perhaps have occurred, when things were going on quietly, and a new government apparently eſtabliſhed in France, which promiſed to its inhabitants more felicity than they had heretofore enjoyed, that there might have exiſted amongſt us ſome wrong-headed individuals, animated with a deſire of imitation:—but we ſhould have ſeen, in the horrors which enſued in its progreſs, that which was ſure to command the averſion of all. In this moment of deluſion, however, when paſſion preſided excluſively in our minds, the apprehenſion of the deſire of imitation increaſed as the ſcene became diſguſting;—and when armed with its

its antidote, the progreſs of the diſorder became in our imaginations moſt likely to be alarming.

But if there was no reaſonable ground on which a revolution in this country ought to have been dreaded; if it appears that in our imaginations the tendency towards it ſtrangely ſeemed the moſt alarming, at the moment when in reality it muſt have been the leaſt ſo; the mode of preventing it, adopted and univerſally reliſhed, when examined, is that which muſt appear ſtill more unaccountable.

War was the receipt held out to us to prevent all tendency to ſedition, to annihilate in this country all idea of a revolution. In former times, wiſe men have told us, that the ſureſt way to prevent ſeditions was to take away the matter of them.—

But

But our ſtateſmen ſtrangely ſaw the beſt preventative in that which was ſure in its progreſs to create the matter of them. The hardſhips and burthens of war have in all ages tended to give riſe to diſcontent; the expence naturally creates poverty; and Lord Bacon wiſely ſtates, that the matter of ſedition is of two kinds, poverty and diſcontentment. It was ſtrange then to ſee that the favourite means adopted to prevent a revolution, was what the experience of man had taught him to believe almoſt univerſally generated it. Nothing but the prejudice of the moment could have made it palatable; at any other time the public would have ſaid to the raſh political empiric who preſcribed it, as the Cynic did of old to a friend officiouſly adviſing him to ſend for a phyſician—"If I die, I'll die at leiſure."

If before entering into hoſtilities we had reaſon to dread the calamities that were likely to enſue from the war—if in it we ſaw not what was to prevent, but that which was much more likely to create the ſeditious diſpoſition we apprehended, and the idea of revolution at which we trembled—we have received little conſolation from the unfortunate events which have attended its progreſs. The accuracy of the predictions of thoſe who oppoſed it might give riſe to a little ſenſation of vanity, did not the melancholy ſituation of the country and our gloomy proſpects preclude the poſſibility of any feeling of the kind. In the ſhort period of eighteen months, during which we have been amuſed with the vague chimeras of our miniſters, we have ſeen ſucceſſively vaniſh before our eyes all thoſe various ſources of ſucceſs with which we had vainly flattered ourſelves.—Diſgraced

by

by the impotent efforts at Toulon; baniſhed from the northern frontier; the rebellion cruſhed in La Vendée—France exhibits herſelf more powerful than before the conteſt. The practice of war has taught her armies the neceſſity of diſcipline, which did not at firſt exiſt, and upon the poſſeſſion of which we founded our hopes. We have ſeen that the want of ſalt-petre could by exertion be ſupplied. We have learnt the impoſſibility of ſtarving a nation. We know that a union of foreign force againſt them has furniſhed them a common cauſe in which with enthuſiaſm they unite — perhaps, on reflection, we may have reaſon to apprehend, with the only thing which could have ſtifled their internal feuds.—We have ſeen the heads of their political leaders and of their generals alternately brought to the block, without any diminution of their energy: and we

have at laſt learned, that which we at firſt ought to have known—that the revolution of France is a revolution of opinion; that the war we are conducting is not againſt armies, but an armed nation.

We have given to a people who did not ſeem antecedently to poſſeſs it, the habit and taſte for military enterpriſe; we have taught them that, of which from experience three years ago they were as ignorant as ourſelves, that they are capable of ſucceſsfully conducting it; and unfortunately we have at once diſcloſed to them, and to the world, the ſad ſecret of their ſtrength, and of our own weakneſs. The allied armies have, during this campaign, loſt 150,000 men; and at the end of it, we ſhall in all have expended ſince the commencement of the war a ſum that cannot be reaſonably computed at leſs than thirty

millions; and with all this waſte of blood and treaſure, if the object be the annihilation of the ſyſtem in France, we have not purchaſed a ſingle thing which the ingenuity of man can ſtate as in the ſmalleſt degree tending towards our ſucceſs in attaining it. Yet impetuous zeal ſtill pervades our councils, and no one has yet aſked,

" Are not the lives of thoſe who draw the ſword
" In Rome's defence, intruſted to your care?
" Should we thus lead them to a field of ſlaughter,
" Might not th' impartial world with reaſon ſay,
" We laviſh'd at our deaths the blood of thouſands
" To grace our fall, and make our ruin glorious?"

By our perſeverance in hoſtilities we have nearly brought ourſelves into the contemptible but lamentable ſtate of a nation emphatically deſcribed by Demoſthenes as being—" the terror of its allies, the laughing-" ſtock of its enemies." The Dutch, if

they conſider their ſituation, will, as applied to us, ſympathiſe with the firſt part of the character; and the inſertion of the word *dupe* is perhaps the only alteration, if he held my pen, that the King of Pruſſia would be inclined to make.

It is a melancholy thing to look back and view the proud eminence from which, by adopting this ſyſtem, we have fallen; and ſtill more ſo to contemplate that height which by perſevering in an oppoſite conduct we might have attained:—the very intereſt of the money which we have thus laviſhly expended, added to our ſinking fund would have brought us at once to that enviable ſtate of financial proſperity, to which the miniſter ſanguinely announced we might have arrived in the year 1808: and it is difficult to define the limits of the degree of opulence to which that doctrine concerning the accumulation

mulation of capital (that has been ignorantly ſtated to have originated with Dr. Smith) would lead you in ſpeculation to think you might arrive; or to the degree of commercial proſperity which, in conſequence of the growing command of capital, we might have attained. But the moſt melancholy part of the picture is ſeen, when we view the importance which our riches, and the idea of our naval ſtrength, had we remained neutral, would have given us in the eyes of the other nations of Europe, when contraſted with the exhauſted ſituation in which the war muſt have involved them. Yet all theſe bleſſings were within our reach. Had we perſevered in the ſyſtem with which we ſtarted, they might in all human probability have been attained; had we, inſtead of conceiving the revolution in France to be a ground for involving us in war, learnt the only leſſon which reaſon and prudence could

have taught us to derive from it, they might have been ſecured; and by adopting a moderate and prudent reform, in the moment of peace and proſperity, of thoſe imperfections to which every human inſtitution is liable, they might have been perpetuated. For, notwithſtanding the preſent unpopularity that attends the idea of reform, I am not afraid to ſubſcribe to the doctrine of one of our greateſt ſtateſmen and philoſophers, —"And if time of courſe alter things to the "worſe, and if wiſdom and counſel ſhall "not alter them to the better, what ſhall be "the end?—it were good therefore that "men in their innovations would follow "the example of time itſelf, which indeed "enervates greatly but quietly, and by de-"grees ſcarce to be perceived."—Nor can I refrain from reprobating the preſumptuous folly of thoſe who wiſh to reſtrain the reaſon and exertions of man from improvement

in

in government, the excellence of which forms the ſureſt ſource of his happineſs and proſperity, at a time when they daily and hourly ſee the advantages derived in the more trivial concerns of life from the well conſidered application of his ingenuity.

I know there are many who pretend ſuch a reverence of this our conſtitution, as to affect to ſee even in its little imperfections freſh ſources for their daily admiration: but were I to be called upon to judge on the comparative reality of the patriotiſm of thoſe who wiſh moderate and gradual reform, and of thoſe who wiſh to preſerve the impurities with which time has impregnated our conſtitution; of thoſe who in reforming are ever watchful, "that it ſhould "be the reformation that draweth on the "change, and not the deſire of change that "pretendeth the reform,"—and of thoſe who tremble

tremble at the idea of purging the ſtate of any of its impurities;—reminding them of the ſpeech of Alexander to his friends—"Hephæſtion is the friend of Alexander; Craterus is the friend of the king,"—I would pronounce without fear of my judgment being impeached—You, the moderate reformer, are the real friend to the conſtitution. You, the obſtinate admirer even of its abuſes, are the friend of that which you think has brought you into power, and that which you look to as likely to preſerve you in it.—Nay, were I diſpoſed to go further, to ſuch a man I would ſay, Your praiſe of the conſtitution is what I value not; it paſſeth away, and leaves no impreſſion behind; I have lived too long, I have attended too conſtantly to the mode in which the politics of this country have been conducted, not to have learnt, that as hiſtory teaches me to regret the glory of God has ſince the commencement of the world

world been too often impiouſly uſed as a prelude to the temporal intereſts of the clergy — ſo a vague and empty rhapſody upon the beauties of our glorious conſtitution has uniformly preceded even the moſt corrupt plans that any miniſter in purſuit of his own intereſt ever dared to bring forward.

Having now ſtated to you what I conceive to be the melancholy reſult of having adopted the ſyſtem on which we have acted, and what would have been the fortunate conſequence of our having perſevered in the oppoſite line; thinking myſelf that the reaſon of man cannot vindicate the preference which has been given, I will endeavour to ſtate to you in my next the circumſtances from whence it has originated.

Habituated to the conſideration of the public

public conduct of the different parties that exiſt in this country; poſſeſſing frequent opportunities of knowing the private ſprings that have actuated them; it will in my next letter be my endeavour to trace the ſyſtem to its legitimate parent, to ſhew you how it was generated by the art of ſome and the folly of others; how it owes its origin ſolely to intrigues for power in the interior of this country.

LETTER II.

Southend, Eſſex, Sept. 20th, 1794.

IT has hitherto been my principal view to endeavour to point out to you that the real intereſts of this country, impartially conſidered and well underſtood, would have led us to perſevere in our original ſyſtem of neutrality. That there was no abſolute ſtate neceſſity for our departure from it, appears ſufficiently obvious. That reaſon never could have dictated a dereliction of its beneficial and ſalutary principles, is equally clear. And when I reflect on the chance of calamity which even Miniſters themſelves muſt have anticipated, from the meaſures they were reſolved to adopt, I am forced to look for ſome other cauſe that muſt have guided them in their operations, than any of thoſe oſtenſible reaſons and feeble pleas they have

hitherto held out to the Parliament and the public.

Nor does this inveſtigation ſeem to be a taſk of much difficulty: their actuating principle is eaſily defined; though to ſtate it with the hopes of conviction, when the public mind has been ſo long warped by erroneous opinions, is hardly poſſible.

Accuſtomed as almoſt all have been to view the preſent ſituation of the country as the reſult of one particular cauſe, however much it may be founded in original error, it muſt be difficult to eradicate the prejudice. Habitual indulgence muſt naturally have added to its ſtrength; nor could it eaſily be ſuppoſed, when the feelings of the moment had connected in the minds of almoſt all, the ſalvation of every thing that is dear to us with engaging in hoſtilities, that

the language of peace could be the language of popularity; or that the dictates of reaſon could ſoon gain an aſcendancy over prejudice ſo inveterate, and deluſion ſo complete. I could not therefore but be ſenſible of the difficulties attending my undertaking; and the anxiety this feeling naturally gave, the diffidence which it unavoidably created, may poſſibly have induced me to dwell more at length than perhaps I needed to have done (in this moment of calamity), in proving to you, that the war never could have originated from any juſt hopes of promoting the welfare of this country. It is that feeling alſo which now leads me, with a view to ſtrengthen any impreſſion I may have made upon you, to go further, and ſhew from what it actually did take its riſe. The man accuſed, who produces in court the real criminal, exhibits the ſtrongeſt and moſt concluſive proof of his own innocence.

I ſhall

I ſhall not however here confine myſelf ſingly to that object. Deep as the calamity is, which this country has ſuffered by being plunged into war, the meaſures of miniſters have produced evils of a different, though of a very ſerious nature. By their arts we have ſeen broken down, and in a manner annihilated, the importance of a party which had long diſtinguiſhed itſelf for its temperate and ſteady adherence to the real intereſts of the people. An eager and uniform ſupporter of that party, ſince I firſt engaged in politics; diſtinguiſhed alone for my attachment to it when elected your repreſentative; I had not preſumption enough to look on your preference of me in any other light than as a mark of your predilection for it. To you therefore I cannot conceive that an account of the circumſtances which have brought it into its preſent ſituation can be unintereſting. To me it is neceſſary; for,

for, if I hope to retain your approbation, it is requiſite to ſhew I had no ſhare in demoliſhing the party, by giving a feeble ſupport to which I am conſcious I firſt acquired my only title to the poſſeſſion of your favour.

The topics too are ſo much interwoven —the origin of the war, and the ſtate into which that party is now brought, are ſubjects ſo much connected—that to treat of the one without touching upon the other would be impoſſible; to treat of them ſeparately difficult.

Long convinced that the welfare of this country depends upon the exiſtence of a body connected on thoſe principles the Whig party has been underſtood to poſſeſs; that the nature of its government creates it; that its preſervation demands it; I am by

principle a party-man; and it is therefore with pleaſure I take the opportunity that this connection with the origin of the war gives me, of ſtating to you the utility of ſuch combination under the government of this country, and of tracing ſhortly the hiſtory of that party whoſe fate I have now to lament, ſo far as is neceſſary to explain the ſituation of thoſe perſonally concerned in politics at the beginning of the revolution in France.—I ſhall then be led to point out to you the origin and progreſs of the intrigue that had for its object to ſecure the poſſeſſion of power, which has unfortunately deprived the nation of the advantage derived from ſo great a body of men united in the cauſe of freedom, and drawn upon it all the numerous misfortunes with which this war is likely to be attended.

By

By exhibiting the advantages which in this country we derive from a united body of men acting on principle, I hope to convince you, that though the calamities of war (the involving us in which was the ſacrifice Mr. Pitt made to the Duke of Portland and his friends) are more immediately felt; their ultimate conſequences cannot prove more ſeriouſly deplorable than the breaking up of the Whig party—the ſacrifice that he gradually contrived they ſhould make to him.

In endeavouring to eſtabliſh the advantages of the exiſtence of party in this country, I know I am about to lay down and defend a doctrine againſt which there exiſts a prejudice ſo general, that whilſt we ſee in times paſt there is hardly any misfortune the hiſtorian does not rack his genius to trace home to this cauſe, ſo we now uniformly hear all the misfortunes and calamities of the day vaguely attributed to the

exertions of party-ſpirit, and the exiſtence of party-feeling.

But a very little reflection muſt enable any one to detect the fallacy of the idea, and teach him to reject the opinion, with reſpect to this country, however generally it may be received.

Party in reality will be found to be attended with advantage, juſt in proportion to the degree the government under which it exiſts admits of its being founded on principle: in the ſimple forms of government there is no poſſible difference in principle which can give riſe to combination; and therefore party under them muſt always be productive of temporary, often of permanent evil.

In a monarchy or a republic there can be no parties ariſing from difference in principle

principle but ſuch as give birth to confuſion; they afford no ſubjects on which to combine, but ſuch as from their nature muſt tend to generate immediate convulſion. In the one, a difference of opinion with regard to the right to the crown, or a deſire totally to overturn the government, upon account of real or ideal oppreſſion, both poſſeſſing the ſeeds of inſtant conflict, are the only topics for which our imaginations enable us to conceive men can wiſh to combine, or that the annals of times paſt ſhew us they have united. There are under ſuch a government no jarring principles upon which you can maintain different opinions; the poſſeſſion of power depends ſolely on the favour of the Sovereign, and favour is always more eaſily ſecured by individual addreſs than by combined effort. In the other, the object which parties muſt naturally have, and which hiſtory points out as their main purſuit, is merely to ſupport the pretenſions

of different individuals to public favour; and whilſt we recollect the evils of the diſturbances attending ſuch conteſts, we cannot but remember how often they have ended ſolely, in being the means of advancing the man of brilliant talents in preference to him whoſe more ſound pretenſions were founded upon the purity of his intentions;—how often the crafty has been able to make party the engine of his elevation, at the expence of the able, the virtuous and diſcerning ſtateſman.

In ariſtocracies, the object of parties has been to ſupport the pretenſions of different families to power; and though we have always ſeen them produce immediate calamity, it is in vain we look for any permanent benefit to the ſociety, to compenſate for the momentary evil. The ſtruggle is here alone for who ſhall have the privilege of oppreſſion; and the conduct of all men in

power,

power, if not well watched, has but too great a reſemblance to make us think that ſuch a conteſt can produce any laſting good.

In our conſtitution, however, of which in theory we are taught to admire the beauties, as proceeding from a due mixture of the different forms of government, there muſt ariſe naturally a difference of opinion on principle. He who gives himſelf up to the purſuit of honours and dignities, who loves the ſplendour of a court, attaches himſelf to the cauſe of monarchy, and ſoon ſees in the increaſed power of the monarch the ſource of additional weight and ſplendour to thoſe who ſurround the throne, and of increaſing value to the favours which the ſovereign can confer. He who poſſeſſes an ardent mind, conſcious of its own rectitude, animated with a deſire of building reputation upon a more ſolid foundation, naturally looks with anxious deſire to acquire the approbation

and applauſe of his fellow citizens, and diſcovers with equal alacrity, in the extent of the power which they may poſſeſs or retain, the value of that he wiſhes to obtain.

Such a difference of opinion cannot long ſubſiſt without the exiſtence of party founded on principle. The friends of monarchy have in the perſon of the monarch a common bond of union; they derive from his councils a ſource of unity of action.

Poor and feeble would be the reſiſtance which the iſolated efforts of the diſunited advocates of freedom could make againſt ſuch an attack; there is nothing in their purſuit which naturally connects them. But they muſt ſoon ſee the neceſſity of uniting to preſerve the value of that for which they all contend againſt the efforts of thoſe who, from their ſituation, naturally preſent themſelves in phalanx.—The folly of reſiſting

the

the attack of an invading enemy by individual exertion, is too great, too apparent not ſoon to generate, under ſuch a government as ours, the appearance of popular party to counteract the effects of court intrigue. And as in the form of our conſtitution we perceive a natural tendency to produce a party of this deſcription, ſo the benefits that muſt ariſe from it are too obvious not to ſtrike any man who ſuffers his mind to conſider the ſubject. Under the ſimple forms of government, party can alone tend to overturn the exiſting conſtitution, or to create temporary diſturbances, without affording the hopes of permanent benefit. Under our mixed form of government, party on principle has a direct propenſity effectually to preſerve a due balance between the various branches of the government; and by the powerful check, which through this means the ſupporters of free-

dom are enabled to give to the gradual encroachments of the Crown, it has a tendency to prevent that ultimate diſturbance, which the imperceptible extenſion of influence is ſure to create, when it has made ſuch advances that the "hoary head of in-" veterate abuſe can no longer draw reve-" rence or obtain protection from the mul-" titude."

If, in conſidering the theory of our conſtitution, we find this principle ariſing out of its very nature; if we diſcover, ſo far from being likely to ſuſtain any detriment or injury from its adoption, that it always muſt prove itſelf a great prop to the vigour and ſtability of our government—when we deſcend to view its practice, party will then appear more than ever neceſſary; the benefits ariſing from it will be ſtill more conſpicuous.

For

For if party conſtituted on ſound principle, when we conſider the conſtitution as theory repreſents it, ſeemed to form its beſt nouriſhment;—when cramped and crippled by its habitual diſorder, corruption—it is the beſt medicine that the wiſdom of the politician can preſcribe; in proportion as corruption increaſes it becomes neceſſary; and now, when in a manner it has univerſally pervaded the frame of the government, without ſuch a combination we can hardly look with hopes of ſafety to its exiſtence.

To engage you in an inveſtigation of the gradual departure of our conſtitution in practice, from that ſtate of purity in which the theoriſt repreſents it; to ſtate to you the mode in which the government is now practically conducted; to lay open to you all the numerous channels of corruption daily practiſed to influence the minds of the

the community; to diſcover the art of forming a parliament, as it is called (which conſtitutes the chief excellence of the Secretay of the Treaſury); to trace the pains and trouble that is taken to learn the mode in which the ſentiments and conduct of individuals, from the higheſt to the loweſt, can be rendered ſubſervient to their views of ſelf-intereſt (which forms a branch of the buſineſs of ſome underling in every office in the kingdom); to exhibit to you the various attempts which have been made, and are daily making, to cauſe this our happy conſtitution ſilently to dwindle into a deſpotiſm of influence—would lead me into a wider field than is conſiſtent with the proſecution of my preſent plan; and the underſtanding of it in detail is unfortunately not neceſſary to convince you, or any one who lives in this country, that the habit of corruption has more deeply and univerſally pervaded the community,

community, than it ever did any people of whoſe manners and cuſtoms we have a diſtinct account. To diſcover the cauſe of this, requires not much greater exertion of our reaſon, than it unfortunately does of our obſervation to perceive the effects.

Power and political importance, which have been the deſire, the anxious wiſh and the purſuit of the ambitious in all ages, have under different governments been acquired or obtained by various means;—by the favour of the people—by the partiality of the monarch—by private intrigue—by open canvaſs—by public diſplay of opulence and magnificence;—nay, even by ſecret largeſs. But it was reſerved to the *practice* of this conſtitution, to exhibit to the eye political power not only ſecretly obtained by indirect means, but become the

object

object of open and avowed ſale and purchaſe; to ſee a market price affixed to the guardianſhip of the rights of the people, and the uſufruct, the poſſeſſion or the reverſion of it, alternately brought under the hammer *.

New as this phenomenon is, its conſequences are obvious. Money in a country where ſuch abuſes prevail acquires a novel and additional value, a value of the moſt dangerous kind, which it was never known antecedently to poſſeſs; for, as it thus ſupplants the neceſſity of exhibiting character and public ſpirit, which ſhould be the ſole recommendation to favour

* To ſtate examples of the two former muſt be unneceſſary; the fact is notorious. But it has been reſerved for the refined corruption of the preſent times, to ſell even the reverſion of national repreſentation—an inſtance of which I could now ſtate.

and confidence, it eſtabliſhes itſelf in requeſt, juſt as it diſcourages the habit and the faſhion of cultivating every thing that is virtuous, and which ought to lead to the acquiring of power. The influence of this open and corrupt traffic cannot be ſuppoſed to confine itſelf to the elector. The man who by his virtue has recommended himſelf to the favour of others, whoſe patriotiſm and ability have formed the ground of their predilection—when their repreſentative, naturally regards a perſeverance in the line of virtue and real patriotiſm to be the ſureſt mode of ſecuring a continuance of their partiality, and a renewal of that truſt with which they have inveſted him. But the man who has acquired it by purchaſe, with equal juſtice, and in reality arguing upon the ſame principle, can conſider it alone as uſeful in ſo far as he may make it conduce to the filling up that blank,

created

created by the price he has paid, in his capital; or perhaps of increaſing his ſtock in trade, and by that means of enabling him to return with additional recommendation to a future canvas;—and thus, with the ſame indifference for the meaſures he ſupports that his conſtituents had for the perſon they elected, he is led at once to diſplay with true ſympathy in *his* ſphere, the feelings that actuated them in *theirs*;—and the corruption of the repreſentative ſoon becomes as open and avowed as that of his conſtituents.

If commerce, riches, and the luxurious habits they produce, have had at all times a natural tendency to create venality, how much ſtronger muſt be their effect in a climate ſo propitious to the growth of corruption! The ſure conſequence that muſt attend the increaſe of wealth and luxury under

under a government so completely impregnated with an open and avowed system of corruption, upon national character, is too obvious to require illustration. No one doubts a despotic government is calculated to render men pliant, and a free one resolute and independent; no one can doubt that excessive venality will be the characteristic of a people reared under such a government. Refinement of manners cannot be more natural to the courtier, bluntness and sincerity to the man born under a popular government, than the study of his own self-interest must be to the man so trained.

From openly pursuing it, and sacrificing every other consideration to this feeling, there can arise among such a people no shame; every one is familiarised to it from his infancy; custom has rendered it habitual; and it is soon

alone regarded as what is called the way of the world—ſomething which either may or muſt be practiſed to hinder us from being the dupes of our own integrity. From the higheſt to the loweſt it muſt ſhew itſelf equally the leading principle that directs the conduct of every one; and we cannot be ſurpriſed at ſeeing the proverbial apology of a poor domeſtic, when quitting his indulgent maſter, become familiar to all—nay, the firſt in rank and fortune, in endeavouring *to better themſelves*, feeling an ample compenſation for every dereliction of opinion and every deſertion of principle.

When government has come to be thus in practice carried on, when this mode of conducting it has prevailed for ſuch a length of time as to have had its full effect in moulding the character and forming the ſentiments of the community, party on principle becomes

more than ever neceſſary; individual effort is not only inefficacious, but it is almoſt impoſſible that it ſhould exiſt in any great extent. To expect from any man, that the pure ſenſe of virtue and patriotiſm ſhould enable him to conquer in himſelf all thoſe deſires and habits with which the ſyſtem of his education, precept, example, and the manners of the ſociety have ſtamped his character, and that he ſhould exhibit perſeverance in this conduct when he ſees that it commands the applauſe of none, is almoſt impoſſible. But it is wild and romantic to think, that there can be many ſuch inſtances of individual forbearance, when we reflect that the general venality which is thus produced has rendered the ſacrifice of public principle (if the price is approved), whatever rank, age, or ſex, you look to, ſure of commanding the ſympathy of all, the approbation and applauſe of moſt.—The man whoſe feelings,

from early impreſſion, have been from infancy in uniſon with the ſentiments which this political depravity has generated; or he who, in paſſing from the college to the commerce of the world, has in compliance with conſtant cuſtom ſacrificed ſooner or later to the ruling propenſities of the ſociety every principle to which his mind was attached, are equally ready to mark with admiration the conduct of ſuch a proſelyte;—and even the woman, who, in compliment to the morality of the times, has made the early but important ſacrifice of affection to intereſt, and now in affluence leads a comfortable life, remote from the man to whom the ſympathies of her mind attached her, flattered with authority that ſeems to countenance and ſanction her conduct, is ready to join in the general chorus of applauſe.

In ſuch a ſituation, to reſiſt the progreſ-

ſive

ſive annihilation of every thing like patriotiſm, even with the aſſiſtance to be derived from the combined effort of party, is difficult; without it, impoſſible. Through the medium however of party formed on principle, we obviouſly acquire the means of giving to the little remnant of public virtue that is to be found, all the vigour which it can derive from the aſſiſtance of private ſentiments of honour in the breaſts of thoſe who are in any degree connected with it. Friendſhip, relationſhip, all the ties which are capable of connecting or attaching men, become by this means ſucceſſively auxiliaries in the cauſe of public virtue, and unite their ſtrength to enable it to make its laſt ſtand againſt the efforts of overgrown corruption; nay, even venality itſelf is often forced for the moment into the ſervice of virtue, and men with benefit to the community are taught to ſtem their natural propenſity to give way to

immediate corruption, whilſt they glut themſelves with the views of future benefits which their imagination preſents to them.

To ſuppoſe that even party (however ſkilfully conducted) in ſuch a conteſt can be ſucceſsful, is difficult; but all muſt agree that it arms the minds of thoſe attached to it with the moſt powerful weapon to reſiſt the vicious propenſities created by the mode of conducting our government; and that it enables us to erect the only fortreſs in defence of public virtue, even the outworks of which have for a ſeries of years ſhewn themſelves impregnable when aſſailed by corruption.

But the good effects of party in the preſent ſituation of this country reſt not even here. Thoſe who are thus by various means united, get individually pledged to a ſyſtem

ſyſtem of conduct; and if they afterwards attain power, private honour becomes (greatly to the advantage of the public) a ſpur to the recollection of the miniſter, who from the corruption incident to the ſituation is but too apt to forget every principle he antecedently poſſeſſed.

Party too naturally draws the attention of all. The community at large, ſome from principle, moſt from views of immediate or remote intereſt, become the adherents of thoſe in poſſeſſion of power, or of thoſe connected on principle: their diſputes attract and monopolize the attention of the community, and thus effectually protect our conſtitution from the licentious inveſtigation of the ignorant, the buſy and aſpiring, and give time for the hand of the ſkilful, uninterrupted by tumult, to adminiſter thoſe preventatives againſt the undermining effects

of time, which in all human inſtitutions are neceſſary, and which all wiſe politicians will adopt. Numerous were the elogies and lampoons on the miſtreſſes and the miniſters of the kings of France that uſed formerly to be handed about; infinite are the numbers of ſatires, eſſays and pamphlets, which in this country have appeared to exhibit the political depravity of miniſters, or their opponents; and we cannot but obſerve, that whilſt the wit and the talents of the community have been thus employed and exhauſted, the beauties of the conſtitution and the virtues of the grand monarch have formed equally the theme of the vague praiſe of the multitude *.

The

* That the exiſtence of party has thus protected the conſtitution; that it has thus ſecured to it the admiration of all, even without enquiry, by monopolizing the

The theoriſt in politics may harangue againſt party, as the moraliſt has often done againſt that falſe ſyſtem of honour which in modern times has given riſe to duelling, and guides in a degree the intercourſe of life; but as the advantage of the one is in ſociety apparent to all, there is none who has attended to the mode in which this government is in practice conducted, who muſt not be convinced of the benefit and even the neceſſity of the other: indeed the marked averſion uniformly ſhewn to it by the courtier, is not a ſtronger proof of his ſenſe of its ſalutary effect in reſtraining the corrupt influence of the Crown, than

the attention; none can doubt, when we reflect, that though the volumes are numerous indeed which have been written on the ſubject of party controverſy, there exiſts no one work by a native of this country, which confines itſelf to the conſideration of our conſtitution, and profeſſes to treat of it at large.

the

the eager and conſtant attacks of the advocates of The Rights of Man are of their feeling of its tendency to preſerve our conſtitution.

It was theſe idea of this extreme utility of party, under the government of this country as it is conducted in practice, that muſt have led thoſe who acted on principle to unite in forming and ſupporting that party which Lord Rockingham paſſed his life in rearing, and which Mr. Fox has uniformly exerciſed his talents in maintaining and ſupporting.

Their object has at all times undoubtedly been to acquire power; for "Power to do "good is the true and lawful end of aſpir- "ing. Good thoughts towards men are little "better than good dreams, except they are "put in act; and that cannot be without "power

"power and place as the vantage and "commanding ground *."—But they disclaimed court intrigue as the mode of acquiring it, and rejected corruption as the sole means of retaining it: they sought to make their course regular, that men might know before hand what they had to expect; and looked to that attachment which the principles they possessed ought to have created in the minds of the people, to that respect which they must have commanded in the breast of the sovereign, as the only channel through which they could attain power with any probable benefit to the community.

If habit had rendered it impracticable to carry on the government without corruption, their system, by calling in principle to its aid, tended at least gradually to diminish the necessity of the extent of it.—By giving

* Lord Bacon.

power

power to thoſe whoſe ſituation entitled them to it, and whoſe characters gave additional reſpect to the poſſeſſion of it—and not excluſively to thoſe whoſe corruption led them uniformly to barter every thing that could make their public characters reſpectable for the privilege of enjoying or diſpenſing it—they hoped to ſecure the approbation and ſupport of the public, without having recourſe to that ſyſtem of corruption with which miniſters had long been accuſtomed to influence it; and thus, while they flattered themſelves that the meaſures they were pledged to purſue when they attained power, would increaſe the happineſs of the people and the importance of the nation, they looked to their mode of conducting the government, as likely to introduce by example, as well as by precept, ſomething more of purity of principle into the

degenerate

degenerate and habitually corrupt minds of the people.

Such were the benefits it was the uniform object of the only party which has existed in this country of late years united on principle, to secure to the nation; and such the means by which they at first proposed attaining them. But it was our misfortune that the power of satisfying the venality, which the practice of government had generated, daily increased; that the corrupt influence of the Crown became more and more extensive; that it decayed not with our danger, nor diminished with our decrease, but increased as our debt became oppressive, as the immediate expences of our government grew enormous. During the American war, the expenditure was so immense, that it afforded the means of almost unbounded influence;

So much ſo as to deſtroy all hopes that principle would be able gradually to ſupplant corruption; and it ſoon became apparent that there was a neceſſity for ſome immediate and forcible means of checking its progreſs, and diminiſhing its extent.

It was then that the party under Lord Rockingham, and thoſe with whom they acted, brought forward and pledged themſelves to the ſupport of all thoſe numerous regulations and reforms in the management of the government of the country, ſome of which they afterwards fortunately carried into execution; but in the opinion of many of the leading men amongſt them, even theſe ſerved only as temporary palliatives. Alive to a ſenſe of the danger from that exceſſive venality which the practice of our conſtitution had produced, from the extravagant means of ſatisfying it which our calamities

lamities had created, they now regarded the limiting the power as inadequate at a time when the magnitude of the evil made it neceſſary, in part at leaſt, to root out the cauſes of its exiſtence.

They felt that there was no hope till the purity of the conſtituent body, and thereby that of their repreſentatives, ſhould be reſtored. Meetings were accordingly called, committees of correſpondence appointed, aſſociations formed, conventions of delegates from the different counties, cities, and towns, who had petitioned parliament, publicly held, with the approbation, concurrence and countenance of many of the firſt men of that party*; and before Lord Rockingham's

* Proofs of the Duke of Portland, Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Fitz-William, Mr. Thomas Grenville, Mr. Windham, Mr. Burke's having attended with aſſiduity the committees and aſſociations formed in the different

ingham's acquiſition of power, a diſcuſſion of the queſtion of reform in the repreſentation of parliament became one of their avowed objects. Mr. Pitt accordingly, in whoſe hands it was placed to be brought forward, ſoon after the formation of that adminiſtration, ſtated, " that the miniſters " had declared their virtuous reſolution of " ſupporting the king's government by " means more honourable as well as more " permanent than corruption; and the na- " tion had confidence in the declaration of " men who had ſo invariably proved them- " ſelves the friends of freedom and the ani-

ferent counties, may be found in The Remembrancer: they are alſo much detailed in letters lately publiſhed in The Morning Chronicle under the ſignature of Hampden.

In the fourth article of the Proteſt entered in the Journals of the Houſe of Lords, Feb. 8, 1780, there is an eloquent defence of the expediency and legality of Aſſociations; amongſt the ſignatures affixed to it, are to be found Portland, Devonſhire, Richmond, Rockingham, Fitzwilliam, Temple, and Camden.

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" mated ſupporters of an equal and fair ſyſ-
" tem of repreſentation *."

Theſe were the objects that out of power they recommended, that in power they were purſuing, when the overturn of that admi-

* Mr. Pitt had then poſſibly ſeen a paper to this effect drawn up by the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis Rockingham, and the Marquis of Lanſdown, and which, though not formally ſigned by them, was interchanged in their hand writings. Mr. Wyvill had alſo probably given him an account of the communication with Lord Rockingham, which he has ſince printed in his political papers. Lord Rockingham, having ſhewn him notes of the terms which his Majeſty had acceded to before his coming into adminiſtration, ſtated, "that the Duke of " Richmond on ſeeing the conditions above mentioned " had obſerved, that no mention was made of a reform in " parliament, and propoſed, as an additional ſtipulation, " that the diſcuſſion of that ſubject in parliament ſhould " be agreed to; which he Lord Rockingham conſented " to."

niſtration, which the illneſs of Lord Rockingham perhaps retarded, which it certainly by no means contributed to, weakened for a time the Whig party. The avidity of ſome to retain the power they had acquired, of others to poſſeſs themſelves of thoſe ſituations to which they aſpired, in a conſiderable degree diminiſhed their numbers. But there never was more cordiality in principle than there exiſted amongſt thoſe who perſevered in the objects of the party, and remained at this time united:—they had ſhewn themſelves by experience to be animated with the ſame ideas of public conduct;—they had done more, they had proved themſelves in practice capable of reſiſting the temptations of office and power, if not to be attained or retained by means which they conſidered conſtitutional. They had had opportunities for obſervation; and they were not

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ſo devoid of reflection, as not to have diſcovered that the path which Lord Auckland afterwards explored, through which Lord Loughborough marched, and into which ſo many choſen Whigs have lately walked, was the ſure and immediate road to power. Ambitious however of the public welfare, they had long taught themſelves to think that any view of individual ambition, or even a difference of opinion on any particular meaſure, was to be regarded as ſecondary to a perſeverance in thoſe principles, and in that ſyſtem, which their creed led them to believe were the only ſecurity for the happineſs of the people and the proſperity of the nation.

Such were the men, who, when admiring the virtues of Lord Rockingham, and regretting his death, looked to the Duke of Portland as likely from his character and

virtues to fill the ſituation with moſt credit to himſelf and advantage to the cauſe; and again erected under him the ſtandard of party, that they might continue to give to that ſyſtem, and to thoſe meaſures which they had long purſued, the aſſiſtance and ſupport which party, by enabling them to call private honour and even views of intereſt in aid of public virtue, at all times ſecures.

Thus they remained united, ready as they always had been to receive aſſiſtance from all, reſolved, in the purſuit of the acquiſition or retaining of power by any other means, to give their ſupport to none * ;—and it was not

* Upon this is founded the diſtinction betwixt the two coalitions which the Duke of Portland has formed. In the firſt, he received the aſſiſtance of Lord North, to forward the views of the party, as was ſufficiently obvious

not long till Lord North's joining them produced (after a ſix weeks interregnum, employed in every endeavour at Court to avoid it) the neceſſity of forming an adminiſtration under the Duke of Portland, as firſt Lord of the Treaſury. The intrigues however that took place to prevent its formation, were only a prelude to thoſe that were reſorted to to effect its diſſolution;—and which terminated, after a fruitleſs attempt on the ſubject of the Prince's revenue, in the moſt open and ſcandalous exertion of the influence of the Crown, to defeat the meaſures of its miniſters relative to the government of India. The effort was attended with ſucceſs, the bill was thrown out in the Houſe of Lords, and Mr. Pitt

vious from the oppoſition of the Court: in the laſt, he has lent his aſſiſtance to the ſupport of that ſyſtem and even of *that* adminiſtration which he had ſo often reprobated.

was brought forward as Miniſter: and whilſt he was in private employed in corruptly laviſhing every favour the Crown could beſtow, to procure ſupport, the friends of the Duke of Portland muſt now with ſhame remember, that in public, the favourite topics of his preſent colleague were the vice of an unprincipled coalition, and the imminent danger to the conſtitution from the prevalence of the ariſtocracy; that he then ſaw ſecurity alone in the unbridled efforts of a mob, or in the unreſtrained exertions of that ſecret influence, to deſtroy which had been the conſtant object of the Whig party.

The miſchief that ſeemed likely to attend this unlimited exerciſe of influence, this open corruption that then prevailed, was great; and as the impreſſion of its fatal effects produced on thoſe who then oppoſed him

was

was ſtrong, ſo the diſapprobation in the public correſpondence of the Duke of Portland at their head was marked.

To ſee, to ſpeak, to treat with the Miniſter whilſt he retained the ſituation which he had thus unconſtitutionally acquired, was deemed and ſtated to be a dereliction of principle *; and virtually to involve the ſurrender

* Extract of a Letter from the Duke of Portland to Thomas Groſvenor, Eſq. Chairman of the Members of the Houſe of Commons met at the St. Alban's Tavern, dated

"Devon Houſe, Saturday 31 Jan. 1784.

"I believe you will agree, that the continuance of "the preſent Miniſtry, and the honour of the Houſe of "Commons, are not very eaſily reconcilable."

Extract of a Letter from Ditto to Ditto.

"Monday morning, 2d February, 1784.

"I very ſincerely regret that the expedient to which "I referred ſhould be thought inapplicable to the diffi-

 "culties

ſurrender of every tenet relative to the Conſtitution, which as Whigs they had maintained.

" culties I had ſtated. I certainly ſuggeſted it as a " mode of reſignation the leaſt embarraſſing to Govern- " ment, in the ordinary functions of office, and, at the " ſame time, as a proof of a diſpoſition to conſult the " honour of the Houſe of Commons, as it ſtands pledged " by the Reſolution of the 16th January. *This laſt* " *is a preliminary, which, as a friend to the ſpirit of the* " *Conſtitution, I muſt think myſelf bound invariably to* " *require.*

" With reſpect to myſelf, I am willing to hope, that " I have not been miſtaken in the conception I formed " of your wiſhes, by ſuppoſing that it was with Mr. " Pitt that you were deſirous I ſhould have a liberal and " unreſerved intercourſe, and not with the head of an " Adminiſtration to which I was *merely to bring an* " *acceſſion of ſtrength.* But Mr. Pitt's meſſage places " him in another character; *and your own good ſenſe* " *will readily ſuggeſt to you, that it was impoſſible for* " *me to ſuppoſe that your expectations extended to a confi-*

" *dential*

maintained.—As things were then ſituated, it was not however to be expected, that corruption would not privately produce its effect. Many of thoſe who had joined under Lord North, had been too long accuſtomed to the ſyſtem that prevailed when he formerly conducted the government, to ſuppoſe that it would not be attended with ſucceſs; it in reality ſoon diminiſhed the numbers of Oppoſition; and, aided by the clamour which was every where prevalent at the general election that enſued, eſtabliſhed that majority which has ſince ſupported the Miniſter.

" *dential conference with him as the repreſentative of the* " *preſent Adminiſtration.*

" *If I had done this, I muſt have fallen in your eſteem* " *(which I aſſure you is a very ſerious object to me), as* " *I ſhould have ſhewn myſelf inſenſible of what is due to* " *the Houſe of Commons.*"

But

But it left the Duke of Portland at the head of a party (in reſpect of numbers and ability, more powerful than the hiſtory of the country antecedently furniſhed any example of) bound to ſupport the meaſures of Lord Rockingham, with the additional pledge of refraining from all connection with thoſe concerned in the late intrigue for power, till by relinquiſhing their ſituations, thus improperly obtained, they had in a degree wiped away that injury which the conſtitution was ſuppoſed to have ſuſtained from their conduct.

For years the Miniſter retained his majority; and the party, though individuals might differ about particular meaſures, remained united, maintained their principle, and purſued their ſyſtem. Their ſtrength and ability were ſuch as ſeemed likely ultimately to enſure ſucceſs; and whilſt it thus

created a doubt in the minds of all, whether they offered up the ſureſt ſacrifice to their venality, by conſulting their immediate or their remote intereſts, it encouraged the public to ſpeak out its mind upon the important queſtions that occurred; and in many inſtances gave that efficacy to their opinion, even when hinted, which, without the exiſtence of ſuch a party, it would have been in vain in the ſituation of the country to have expected. Of this, during the courſe of theſe laſt ten years, there have been many examples; none however more marked than that which took place on the recent inſtance of the Ruſſian armament; on which occaſion the miniſtry were induced haſtily to relinquiſh their meaſures, in a manner as diſgraceful to themſelves as it was probably fortunate for their country; in a manner, however, which, as it contributed in no ſmall degree to weaken and degrade

grade in public eſtimation thoſe who conducted the government of the country, ſo it added both in ſtrength and popularity to their opponents.

Such was the ſituation of thoſe concerned in the politics of this country at the commencement of the year 1792. The revolution in France, though it had engaged the attention of all, though the opinions entertained of it were known to be various, when alluded to in public, ſeemed to be conſidered univerſally as likely to ſecure to this country a certainty of peace and tranquillity.

Mr. Burke alone had at that time viewed it as pregnant with immediate calamity; he had twice introduced the diſcuſſion in Parliament, in a manner that was deemed by thoſe who had long loved him and wiſhed

to

to repreſs it, diſorderly; by thoſe who had long ſhewn their averſion to him, and who now wiſhed miſchievouſly to encourage him, indiſcreet:—but he was openly ſupported in his opinions by none; and it ſeemed improbable, that what was univerſally deemed the folly of one man ſhould become the politics of all. Through life he had diſplayed talents that deſervedly commanded admiration; but his want of judgment and feeling had ſo enfeebled their effect, that whether he was employed in hurling his Sovereign in the hour of calamity from the throne, in brandiſhing a Jacobin dagger in the ſenate, or in beſpeaking the favour of the court for the criminal he was about to accuſe; by the ill-judged coarſe invective in which he indulged, the beſt exertions of his talents were no longer received but with a mixture of pity on the partof

his friends, and contempt on the part of his opponents. His opinions, and even his exertions in public, had been through life attended with much unmerited unpopularity; and it ſeemed therefore hardly poſſible, that at a moment when (to uſe his own language) he had ſo ſoftened, diluted, blended, and weakened, the diſtinguiſhing colours of his life, as to leave nothing diſtinct or determinate behind — that he ſhould be able to ſow the ſeeds of the remote diſſolution of that party, which perhaps he had long injured by his ſupport;— or that his writings, to the misfortune of his country, would be in future reſorted to as the only grammar that contains the elements of the preſent politics of the nation.

But as party has always been the moſt formidable check upon thoſe who have acquired power by intrigue, and retained it by

by corruption; to divide and diſunite has ever been their moſt eager purſuit, and the ſlighteſt opportunity was too valuable to be loſt. Nothing could diſplay this in ſtronger colours than the anxiety of the adherents of Adminiſtration to promote Mr. Burke's being allowed to diſcuſs the French revolution in the committee on the Quebec Bill; —and the hopes of future ſupport artfully thrown out upon that occaſion by the Miniſter himſelf, to a man whom he had ever antecedently treated with haughty contempt, exhibited a ſtrong proof of the ſatisfaction he derived even from the moſt diſtant hopes of creating diſunion, but proceeded probably more from a compliance with the general ſyſtem of conduct to be purſued, than from any expectation that yet dawned upon him of being able through ſuch a medium to effect the diſunion of his opponents.

It was not however long before a more flattering opportunity preſented itſelf. Early in this year, a conviction that the abuſes in France had been ſuffered to gather and accumulate until nothing but an eruption could put an end to them, and that preventative remedies had not been thought of in time, or were not propoſed until it was too late to carry them into effect, induced many belonging to the party to think, that the experience of the day now taught them to look to a reform in Parliament as more than ever deſirable. Lord Chatham had ſtated it "as neceſſary to infuſe a portion of new "health into the Conſtitution," and had declared, "that in his opinion, without it, this "nation, with the beſt capacities for grandeur "and happineſs of any on the face of the "earth, muſt be confounded with the maſs "of thoſe whoſe liberties were loſt in the "corruption of the people." Many of the miniſters

miniſters had formerly ſupported it;—the leading man in oppoſition had been active in committees and aſſociations to promote it;—Lord Rockingham, antecedent to coming into adminiſtration, had formally adopted it;—and the proſpect of peace and tranquillity, held out by thoſe in power as certain, ſeemed to point out the time as peculiarly adapted to it. They had ſeen in France, that as government was gradually weakened it had been reduced from bargaining with the people to yield to them: and they conceived, that now, when the Conſtitution was rooted in the affections of almoſt all, was the only time when you could attempt to perpetuate the attachment to it, by giving to the people that weight to which in the eyes of moſt they ſeemed according to the ſpirit of our Conſtitution to be entitled.

From the Miniſter they had every reaſon to expect ſupport to a meaſure which has been emphatically ſtyled the legacy of his dying father, and his own virgin effort;—from ſome of the heads of the party with whom they were connected they knew they would meet with oppoſition; but they could not expect a very eager or ardent reſiſtance of meaſures which they themſelves had formerly with ſuch activity purſued: and as the difference of opinion upon the ſubject of parliamentary reform was known; as it was underſtood, and in a manner explained *, that it never could

* At a meeting at Burlington Houſe, in the beginning of March 1792, for the purpoſe of conſulting on a meaſure that was then to be brought forward, parliamentary reform was openly ſtated to be a ſubject on which there were known to exiſt three ſeparate and diſtinct opinions in the party. But this was never conſidered as a ground of diſunion.

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tend to the diſunion of the party, they at all events ſaw no danger of depriving the country of the ſure benefits which were likely to flow from it.

When, however, a notice was given on the ſubject in the Houſe of Commons; regardleſs of his former conduct, the Miniſter ſhewed himſelf ſo eager, that in a manner unuſual, and even diſorderly *, he retracted his former opinions on the ſubject, invidiouſly connected the propoſal with an intention of exciting in this country a revolution ſimilar to that in France, and with triumphant applauſe announced his apoſtacy: it was a ſubject on which he had formerly been oppoſed by many of thoſe

* To debate a ſubject upon a notice given, and when of courſe there can be no queſtion before the Houſe, has always been deemed in Parliament irregular.

who acted with the preſent Oppoſition, and on which he was ſure to obtain his favourite object of dividing the ſtrength of that party which he now more than ever dreaded: he remembered the line they had formerly taken too well to doubt that numbers of them would give his new opinions their decided ſupport; and if to the proſpect of ſuch a diviſion his own conſiſtency ſeemed to him then but a poor ſacrifice, the opportunity afforded by a declaration in debate of their being ready to concert meaſures with him, muſt have indeed amply compenſated for any loſs of character which in his eſtimation he was likely to ſuſtain, and was a thing not to be neglected by a Miniſter, whoſe friends will find it difficult to prove that he has not on the ſubject of reform liſtened with as much attention to betray, as he has ſpoken with aſſiduity to deceive.

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To force on the queſtion of reform itſelf was impoſſible; the notice had been given for the following ſeſſion of Parliament: but in the courſe of the diſcuſſion that had taken place, the love of French principles, the reſolutions of certain ſocieties, and the doctrines of ſome pamphlets that had been circulated, had been ſo artfully blended with the ſubject of reform, that the pledge given to unite and conſult on the one was conceived to extend to the other.

Even upon thoſe ſubjects, to deviſe a queſtion that could be brought forward with honour to himſelf, and with advantage to his country, was difficult; but it was at that moment too deſirable not at all events to be attempted.—By means of a proclamation, and a propoſed addreſs of

thanks, a meaſure was therefore ſoon contrived, which carried internal evidence of its being brought forward with no other view than invidiouſly to attempt to ſeparate thoſe who had been ſo long connected. To promote that end it was admirably calculated; it was projected the moment there appeared the moſt remote probability of creating it; —as deviſed to produce the real effect intended, it commanded admiration;—but the impudence of the attempt would have ſtartled any one leſs practiſed in the arts of deluſion than thoſe by whom it was framed. No oſtenſible ground that it held forth could reaſonably account for its appearance at the moment. It alone ſtated the exiſtence of publications that had been openly circulated for a length of time, of writings induſtriouſly recommending them that were not new to the public eye; and it hinted

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at the danger of ſocieties whoſe reſolutions had long been openly advertiſed. The reſorting to ſo extraordinary a meaſure ſeemed a declaration of the inadequacy of that conſtitution, which they held out to our admiration, to protect itſelf by the uſual proviſions of its laws. It in a manner recorded their paſt inattention to the dangers which they then deprecated; and confeſſed their inability to diſcharge the ordinary duties of their ſtation without the extraordinary aid of Parliament; and it ſeemed likely, by the weakneſs and inefficiency which it exhibited in his Majeſty's councils, to be more derogatory from the juſt authority of government than any imaginary progreſs, which with great injuſtice to a loyal people they attributed to the principles aſſerted in the writings of which they complained. But theſe dangers to the peace of the com-

munity were regarded as trifling; the indirect avowal of incapacity and inconſiſtency appeared to the Miniſter ſmall, when compared to the ſiniſter advantages that attended a meaſure which held out the ſure proſpect of producing private conſultation and communication with thoſe with whom whilſt in office he had eight years before, in vain, endeavoured to obtain it, and of creating at once diſunion where for eight years he had in vain attempted to ſow the ſeeds of it.

He had alternately courted popularity and Court favour, as means of obtaining power *. He had conjoined both to ſecure

* In his oppoſition to the American war, and bringing on the queſtion of reform, he ſeems to have aimed at the one; and, in coming into office after Lord Rockingham's death, to have taken advantage of the other.

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it *; but in abjuring that reform in the repreſentation, the ground on which he had aimed at acquiring the one, he ſeemed to have diminiſhed his chance of popular ſupport, as much as his recently inſiſting on his Sovereign's diſmiſſing Lord Thurlow muſt have diminiſhed his claim to the other. And he now therefore more than ever looked to the diſmemberment of his opponents, and the poſſible chance of acquiring by that means ſome new ſupport, as the object which ought, and in reality did, direct all his meaſures.

That the proclamation was by the Miniſter himſelf conſidered as a meaſure of private expediency, and not of State neceſſity, can hardly be doubted. In any other

* When he became firſt Lord of the Treaſury.

point

point of view there could have exiſted no neceſſity of conſultation with Burlington-Houſe; he required not the addition of their numbers; his triumphant and confiding majority ſtill remained; he was ſtill ſurrounded by the protecting influence of thoſe who had ſupported him ſince he was at the helm of affairs; he had in his hands the full means of carrying his meaſures into effect; and without conſultation he was already ſecure of the voice of thoſe who had liſtened to him with approbation on the notice given of a motion for reform.

To open the door to private negotiation with them muſt have been his aim. If he as Miniſter really thought it neceſſary to adopt meaſures for repreſſing a ſpirit of inſurrection in the country — what were theſe meaſures? Was the proclamation the only

only one he at this time propoſed? Had he no idea of then calling out the militia, and of other meaſures he has ſince adopted? Or was no ſuch intimation given to Burlington-Houſe? Is it not notorious that they acquieſced in the firſt part of his propoſal, and rejected the reſt? and that in compliance with the opinion of men no ways connected with the executive adminiſtration of the country, and in no degree reſponſible for its effects, the Miniſter laid aſide meaſures he himſelf had ſtated as neceſſary for the public good?—that the militia remained quiet? and that the proclamation, cut and carved into a different ſhape by the ſtill ſqueamiſh followers of the Duke of Portland in his new purſuit, was deemed ſufficient by Mr. Pitt, becauſe it was ſatisfactory to them? If he was in earneſt therefore in his belief of danger, to his private ends he

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ſacrificed the intereſts of his country. If his dreads were aſſumed, we ſee in this early ſtage a ſelf-evident proof of that ſyſtem of conduct he has ſince for ſimilar purpoſes invariably purſued—wiſely perhaps for his private ends, but unfortunately with too much ſucceſs for the welfare of his country.

By the firſt appearances that attended this attempt to divide, he had no reaſon to be diſcouraged; the proclamation produced both private conſultation with him and public difference of opinion in his opponents. But to thoſe who at private meetings heard the ſtrong declarations of adherence to the ſyſtem on which the party was founded, and of undiminiſhed enmity to the principles on which the adminiſtration was formed, and had been conducted *, there

* Before the debate on the proclamation, a meeting was

there appeared little proſpect of his ultimately effecting any coalition. And even their public language muſt have afforded him but a diſcouraging proſpect: he could hardly imagine that the Viceroy of Corſica could be induced to wave differences that were fundamental and irreconcileable *; or that Mr. Windham would ſoon ſtrip himſelf of his embroidered ſuit of pretence, and ſhare with him the tattered

was held at Mr. Fox's of all thoſe in Oppoſition who were likely to take part in the debate on either ſide, for the purpoſe of communicating the line they intended following in debate, and thus marking in the ſtrongeſt poſſible manner the impracticability of its creating diſunion.

* Words uſed by Sir Gilbert Elliott, in a ſpeech which, as it appeared to have been written, muſt have been ſtudied.

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rags of his genuine deformity; that he could be prevailed upon to exhibit himself in conjunction with him before a confiding majority, like the uncased Frenchman in ruffles without a shirt—in tinsel and lace on the outside, and in dirt and dowlas within*: and the declaration made in debate by the Duke of Portland himself, did not seem to be calculated to give him much encouragement. As he had prevailed however in establishing a private communication on the subject of the proclamation, in a manner contradictory to the antecedent declarations of the party, he felt doubtless to a degree encouraged by a channel being

* See Mr. Windham's Speech on Mr. Thompson's motion, "To inquire into all abuses committed by persons in office at the election of a Member to serve in "Parliament for the City of Westminster, in July 1788 "—as far as the same relates to penalties incurred under the Excise Laws, or Lottery Act."

now

now for the firſt time opened, through which an experiment might be made.

That the Miniſter ſhould ſacrifice one of the main props of his government to the unnatural object of providing for one whom he had ever reprobated, and by whom he had been uniformly, with acrimony, oppoſed, ſeemed ſtrange; that at the moment of holding forth in public the neceſſity of ſupporting and ſtrengthening the hand of government, he himſelf ſhould chooſe to overturn one of the principal pillars by which his power had been ſupported, was ſingular. But his plan was now obviouſly concerted;—the apparent diviſion of Oppoſition had diſcloſed to him new views of perſonal greatneſs: with the ſubtilty he has ever poſſeſſed, he graſped at the opening; and to add to the probability of its ſucceſs, diſregarding what muſt have been the feelings of his

Sovereign, and forgetful of the ſervices he had rendered, by the diſmiſſion of Lord Thurlow a door was opened to the completion of the views of the man in Oppoſition that he muſt have regarded as moſt likely to liſten to his offers. He recollected the conduct of Mr. Wedderburn, when he became Solicitor General; and if he did not augur from thence a probability of ſucceeding in detaching Lord Loughborough and ſome of his friends from the party, he ſaw at leaſt upon this occaſion the certainty of finding in him a ſure and willing negotiator. He had probably read with attention the works of his new maſter in politics, and the declaration had not eſcaped him, that "as to "leaders in parties, there is nothing more "common than to ſee them blindly led; it "is by go-betweens the world is governed: "theſe go-betweens influence the perſons "with whom they carry on the intercourſe,

" by ſtating their own ſenſe to each of them " as the ſenſe of the other." And thus indeed they generally obtain their ends. As long as the Chancellorſhip was vacant, he could have no doubt that the ends of the Chief Juſtice of the Common Pleas would coincide accurately with his own; he was ſure of his activity;—and the general diſpoſition he had at the time to believe every thing Mr. Burke ſaid, gave him perhaps hopes of the ſucceſs of ſuch a go-between.

After ſome fruitleſs efforts and vague converſation, however, in which the arts incident to the ſituation were doubtleſs not left unpractiſed by the ingenuity of the negociator, the attempt proved abortive; and even the conductor of the negociation himſelf ſeemed to have caught for a moment a little of the principle which thoſe with whom he negociated then poſſeſſed, and de-

clared his unwillingneſs without their concurrence to accept.

By the Duke of Portland ſo little attention was paid to it, that almoſt at the very time a propoſition was made, with his concurrence and authority, by a perſon deſervedly high in rank and eſtimation, for the formation of a new adminiſtration *; and ſo little did Mr. Pitt's friends ſee any hopes of acquiring new ſtrength, or any certainty of ſtability, that, it is ſaid, they forced him ſoon after this to throw aſide that affected ſqueamiſhneſs which formerly diſtinguiſhed his conduct, and accept the Wardenſhip of the Cinque Ports, as a permanent proviſion in the event of a reverſe of fortune.

But the autumn of this year was replete

* The Duke of Leeds is ſuppoſed to have had the honour of ſubmitting this propoſal to his Majeſty.

with

with more extraordinary events than in the hiſtory of man were ever antecedently crowded together in ſo ſhort a period of time. If thoſe who were avowed enemies, in ſpeculation, to the French revolution felt elated when they ſaw the rapid progreſs of the allied arms on their entering into France, the ſubſequent occurrences had tended equally to depreſs them; and as the exertions of the French made in their defence commanded reſpect, it was by them dreaded, that their principles would in this country immediately acquire a proportionable admiration. Reaſon had ſo far deceived all concerning the events of the campaign, that it became for a time out of faſhion to reſort to it. Thoſe who formerly repreſented themſelves as fearing that change might lead to ſtir up an admiration of French principles, and for that reaſon more than ever diſliking reform, now openly avowed their dread of an im-

mediate revolution; and to their imaginations, occupied with the phantom, there was hardly any occurrence that did not appear ſomehow to portend it: with perfect indifference to the reality of the grounds of their fears, like true zealots, they thought and they harangued alone on the extent of their alarms.

The French in the mean time, elated with their ſucceſs, had wantonly in ſeveral inſtances been guilty of acts which gave us juſt ground of offence; and the Miniſter, whilſt the feelings and temper of thoſe who had formerly joined him upon the proclamation ſeemed upon theſe topics to inſure him ſupport, ſaw the certainty of being able, in conſequence of the conduct of France, to produce diſcuſſion on the ſubject.

He now ſaw a proſpect of diviſion, not upon one iſolated meaſure, but upon queſtions

tions which, as long as they were under diſcuſſion, muſt from their nature form the moſt important ſubjects of deliberation, and thus of creating amongſt his opponents ſuch a difference, as a man even leſs experienced in thoſe arts than himſelf could eaſily foreſee would at leaſt give an opportunity, and furniſh ample pretence, for the many who were attached alone by feelings of honour to the party (he had ſhewn himſelf ſo anxious, by diviſion, to deſtroy), to conſult thoſe views of intereſt which the poſſeſſion of his ſituation has taught others as well as himſelf to believe exiſted in all.

If the intereſts of his country had been his only or his principal object; if he had been alone actuated with a deſire to obtain redreſs for the injury or inſult that we or our allies might have ſuffered; as there exiſts no means of obtaining ſuch redreſs but by

addreſſing ourſelves to the power of whom we complain, he would of courſe have attempted to negociate. Then was not the moment when he would have rouſed a queſtion about the recognition of the French Republic, which by his conduct he had already decided *; or when he would have laid ſuch a ſtreſs upon the difference betwixt a ſecret and avowed negociator—a point which, though it ſeemed immaterial to us, the nature of their ſituation, he knew, rendered it impoſſible for the Proviſional Executive Government to get over †. Then was not the

* See Mr. Fox's Letter to his Conſtituents.

† In a converſation Mr. Pitt had with M. Maret, the end of November 1792, the latter reports himſelf to have ſaid, "You ſpeak, Sir, of a ſecret agent. I "foreſee a difficulty.—You know that in France we "profeſs a great reſpect for the public opinion, which "conſtitutes

the time, when he would have ſtated with ſuch alarm, and ſhewn ſuch eagerneſs to reſent with acrimony, communications of the French with ſocieties in this country, which he had long ſuffered unmoleſted to proceed *. But in purſuit of his favourite object, the

" conſtitutes the force of free government, and which " is a wholeſome reſtraint on thoſe who govern. This " public opinion, however, is ready to demand of " the Proviſional Executive Council, Why it has had " the weakneſs not to require the recognition of the " French Republic by England? Will it then be poſſible " to treat with you by the means of a ſecret agent? " We have here a Miniſter Plenipotentiary, who has " all the confidence of our Government."

* See the correſpondence of the Conſtitutional Society with the Convention of France and various Jacobin Clubs, publiſhed in London in 1792, where there is to be found an account of the reception of an embaſſy from the Jacobin Society of Nantes, and a number of letters, of a date much antecedent to this, ſtronger than any thing that has appeared.

diviſion of his opponents and the acquiſition of ſupporters, this was obviouſly the only line he could purſue. Looking to it, he was naturally led to throw ſuch difficulties in the way of accommodation, to ſuſpend with as much art as poſſible negociation, that the object of difference might be kept up; and to call Parliament together as ſoon as poſſible, that the opportunity of fermenting it by public diſcuſſion might occur. Under the laws of the country, it was difficult to meet Parliament ſo ſoon as the eagerneſs in his favourite purſuit rendered deſirable; but the object was too big for even the greateſt obſtacles not to appear inſignificant. At any other time, he would have been careful of the facts he put into the mouth of his Sovereign; but to obtain his end, he heſitated not now to iſſue a proclamation, which, as it gave the firſt, fortunately gave the laſt account

count of any inſurrections exiſting*; and in conſequence of this, Parliament, as the law directs, was immediately ſummoned.

In anticipating the ſupport which he was now ſure in Parliament of obtaining, he was not dead to a ſenſe of the neceſſity of rouſing a ſudden fermentation in the minds of the people, that they might ſympathize with the conduct which his purpoſes rendered it neceſſary he ſhould purſue. To introduce any thing like that club government which had

* Mr. Grenville, who on the firſt proclamation ſupported and ſtill ſupports Adminiſtration, declared, "that nothing that had been mentioned appeared to "him by any means equivalent to an inſurrection. He "was of opinion, that the ſtate of the country was ill "deſcribed by the proclamation; and he was the more "induced to come forward with this opinion, as he was "apprehenſive that danger might ariſe from ſuch ex-"aggeration."

been the ſource of calamity in France ſeemed a ſtrange and dangerous meaſure, at a moment when his eloquence was chiefly to be employed in reprobating it. But, in purſuit of his ends, he had become habitually negligent of the conſequences or the means: and as he was ready to riſque the involving us in war, by the haughty language he held, and the difficulties he artfully created, for the purpoſe of flattering thoſe in Parliament whoſe ſupport he courted; ſo he was willing to adopt even the hated forms of French anarchy, to force the minds of the people into ſuch a ſtate, as might admit of their ſympathizing with thoſe meaſures, which his intrigue for ſupporters had induced him ſo ſuddenly and rapidly to adopt, that the uſual ſure but ſlow channels of influence had not time to effect the change which his ſecurity required. Clubs accordingly everywhere appeared, headed by the dependants

and

and eſtabliſhed under the influence of Government, and the clamour that was raiſed ſoon announced the ſucceſs of the meaſure. When Parliament met, the reſult of his plans was apparent. In the party he wiſhed to break down there exiſted a marked diviſion; and as the diſunion furniſhed the opportunity, the clamour of the country ſoon gave encouragement to all thoſe who were withheld only by a ſlight feeling of honour, to declare their ſupport of his meaſures. It was then that affected dread of the friends of the unfortunate Briſſot producing an apparent neglect of his engagements to his own, gave to the nation a new Chancellor *, and to the Miniſter additional ſupport. And the ſucceſſive compliments, which by the Alien Bill, the infractions of the Commercial Treaty, and the ignomini-

* In the Houſe of Lords, the dread of the friends of Briſſot was the ſatisfactory reaſon given for his conduct.

ouſly diſmiſſing the Ambaſſador, he paid to his new ſupporters, whilſt they unfortunately involved us in a war, of which, ſix months before this opportunity of acquiring ſtrength occurred, he had hardly ſeen in fifteen years the probability, inſured him the promiſed ſupport even of ſome of the leaders of the party, at the moment that he was riſking the ſafety of his country to rob them of their ſtrength.

The ſtrong and animated exertions of the ſmall Oppoſition that remained to promote negociation and ſecure peace, which undoubtedly then might have been obtained *,

* I had at this time frequent opportunities of ſeeing and talking with many of the leading men in France; and my obſervation concurs with the account ſince given by Dumourier, and even with that given by a man ſuppoſed to be in the employ of Government, to convince me that there exiſted not an individual in that country, in poſſeſſion of any influence, who did not anxiouſly wiſh to avoid hoſtilities with this.

were

were overborne by the ſtrength he had acquired, and drowned in the clamour he had created. And whilſt I look back with ſorrow at the ſupport which Mr. Fox then loſt; with pride at the meaſures he recommended; with aſtoniſhment at the ſucceſs of the intrigue of the Miniſter for ſupporters; with grief at the calamities it has occaſioned—I cannot help recollecting the criticiſm of Lord Bacon on the ſpeech of Themiſtocles the Athenian, which emphatically deſcribes the different excellencies thoſe ſtateſmen exhibited upon this, as they have upon every other occaſion. "Themiſtocles "being deſired at a feaſt to touch a lute, ſaid "he could not; but yet he could make a "ſmall town a great city. Theſe words "(holpen a little with a metaphor) may "expreſs two different abilities in thoſe that "deal in buſineſs of eſtate:—for if a true "ſurvey be taken of counſellors and ſtateſ-

"men,

" men, there may be found, though rarely,
" thoſe that can make a ſmall ſtate great,
" yet cannot fiddle;—as on the other ſide
" there will be found a great many that can
" fiddle very cunningly, but yet are ſo far
" from being able to make a ſmall ſtate great,
" as their gift lies the other way, to bring a
" great and flouriſhing ſtate to ruin and de-
" cay:—and certainly thoſe degenerate arts
" and ſhifts, whereby many counſellors and
" governors gain both favour with their
" maſter and eſtimation with the vulgar, de-
" ſerve no better name than fiddling."

By the art of Mr. Pitt and the folly of ſome of its leaders, Oppoſition was now effectually fiddled out of moſt of its ſupporters *; by his conduct and meaſures the country

* When the Duke of Portland called, in the month of

country was involved in war; and thus, without an attempt at, and even by means of carefully avoiding, negociation, the different ends of all were attained. The Court ſaw that party broken down, whoſe oppoſition to the ſyſtem of ruling by ſecret influence they dreaded, and which it had been the Miniſter's object at all events to demoliſh. The Duke of Portland and his friends ſaw the country involved in that war, in which their alarms fooliſhly taught them to ſee the ſecurity and proſperity of the nation.

Deprived of their ſtrength, it was in vain that the Duke of Portland, and ſome few

of February following, a meeting of all thoſe who had formerly acted in the Oppoſition, to conſider the means of oppoſing the Traitorous Correſpondence Bill (which he however afterwards ſupported), excepting thoſe who with Mr. Fox oppoſed the war, and ſome of his Grace's own relations, there was hardly any body attended.

of

of the leading men with whom he was connected, ſtill to a degree maintained the principle upon which they had acted; that they repeated their averſion to the ſyſtem upon which adminiſtration had been formed, and attributed to that, and the conduct of the miniſters, the calamities in which the country was involved; that upon all occaſions, both in public and in private, they held out the impoſſibility of ſuch a coalition *. The opinion of the Miniſter, which

* In the Houſe of Lords, on the Alien Bill, the Duke of Portland declared, that "it was not on account "of any perſonal attachment to the preſent Adminiſtra- "tion that he ſupported it. He could not forget the "manner in which they came into power; he could not "forget the many circumſtances in their conduct by "which, in his opinion, they had forfeited all title to "the confidence of the nation; he could not forget that "to their miſconduct many of our preſent difficulties "were owing."---And in the Houſe of Commons Lord Titchfield, after declaring that his political ſentiments

and

which they formerly poſſeſſed, and even now ſtated, one would have thought muſt have taught them, that ſuch declarations could now alone ſerve as food for his vanity; that he muſt have looked with delight at the ſtate into which he had reduced them—with joy at the ſituation in which he had placed himſelf. If the war was attended with ſucceſs, he ſaw himſelf ſecure of their ſupport, ſure of monopolizing the credit—and, if unfortunately it ſhould be otherwiſe, he eaſily muſt have perceived,

and attachments remained the ſame that they had ever been. "His opinion of the gentlemen who compoſed "the preſent Adminiſtration was in no reſpect altered;" ſtated that "he could not too explicitly declare, that in "no other reſpect could he give them any ſhare of his "confidence, and that he could not too openly avow his "attachment to thoſe political principles and connec-"tions, with which he had the happineſs of entering "into public life, and to which it was his ſincere "wiſh for ever to adhere."

from the experience he now had of them, that it would require leſs management than he had already practiſed with certainty, to ſhare with them the diſgrace and divide the reſponſibility. Ever fond of humbling thoſe with whom he unites, with what pleaſure muſt he have heard thoſe declarations, when he anticipated the additional ignominy that would attend their conduct if ever the hour came when the misfortunes of the country ſhould render a union convenient for him! for he could not doubt but that, at any time, he had them completely in his power; and that a call upon their honour to come forward, and ſhare the reſponſibility in conducting thoſe meaſures of which they had in a manner been the authors, even if their inclination for place did not make them graſp at the offer, would probably effect that which however at all events a threat of his retiring was ſure to ſecure.

In

In the hour of calamity we have accordingly ſeen them brought forward; and as their folly had already effected a ſacrifice of the ſtrength of the party to his art, they have now been forced to offer up the principle of it to his convenience. The term is harſh, and I feel perhaps more in writing it than moſt of them will in reading it; but whilſt truth prevents me from diſtinguiſhing betwixt Mr. Eden and the Duke of Portland, I learn, from recollection, that there was a time in which he would have felt it as ſtrongly as myſelf.

Yet ingenuity itſelf cannot draw any material diſtinction; the very principle of the party, as it precluded its diſſolution by difference on any particular meaſure, rendered it impracticable to coaleſce with an adminiſtration formed on the principle of Mr. Pitt's, even though you agreed with

him on ſubjects of the greateſt importance. The cordial ſupport of Mr. Fox on the queſtion of the Slave Trade never had made a union more probable; but if it was otherwiſe, Lord Auckland would ſtand armed with his defence as well as the Duke of Portland: and the defence of both is ſimilar; for if the one conſiders the war as a caſe of ſufficient importance to authorize it, the other may conſider the commercial treaty as ſuch. The language of both conveys the ſame idea, and is equally repugnant to every principle on which they were united: it makes the ſtability of connection depend upon the whim, caprice, perhaps the convenience, of individuals, and deſtroys every ground on which a party can exiſt.

Such is the manner and ſuch the purpoſes for which this country has in reality

been involved in war; and such are the *means* that have induced some of the leading men of that party, which it had been the object and the pride of Lord Rockingham's life to form, to trample its principles under foot, and thus to give Mr. Pitt an opportunity of completing his triumph over them—who, as he had formerly exhibited Lord Auckland on the treasury bench—now reserved for the head of the Whigs, the more marked humiliation of exhibiting him in that cabinet whose formation he had uniformly deprecated, decorated with that blue ribbon which his Sovereign and the Nation claimed for Lord Howe, and in possession of that third Secretaryship of State which it had been the boast of his party formerly to reform*,

Thus

* In Lord Rockingham's administration, this office was abolished, and an Act of Parliament passed to make

Thus terminated, in form as well as reality, the exiſting Whig party: affording, unfortunately for the country, a ſtriking leſſon to men of talents and abilities in future, how they lend theſe ineſtimable bleſſings, where political fear may predominate or folly may guide. Happy in domeſtic life, beloved by their friends, and reſpected by all, the nominal heads of the party might have long, with credit to themſelves, enjoyed the tranquil comforts that fortune and rank could give. But, drawn from their natural ſphere, puſhed into public notice, raiſed in the opinion of

it untenable with a ſeat in the Houſe of Commons. In the perſon of the Duke of Portland it has been revived, who has lent himſelf to a miſerable evaſion of the ſpirit of the Act, and, though in poſſeſſion of the department held by Mr. Dundas, has, by accepting the ſeals that were formerly in the poſſeſſion of the third Secretary, ſecured, as they imagine under the letter of the Act, the poſſibility of Mr. Dundas's remaining in Parliament.

the

the world by the talents and abilities of thoſe around them—at the moment when theſe by ſteadineſs and principle ſaw, in the preſervation of the country from the calamities in which it was about to be involved, an ample requital for their paſt toils—at a time when party became moſt neceſſary—ſome actuated by fear, ſome by folly, at once annihilated all their fair hopes. By his arts they were induced to throw themſelves at the feet of a Miniſter whom they had reprobated, and by this ſhameful and diſaſtrous event have for the time, it is to be feared, rendered it equally impoſſible for the Sovereign on the one hand, or the Public on the other, to reſiſt the calamity of the meaſures he has, to ſecure their ſupport, been induced to adopt.

Of the effects of the war I have already had occaſion to ſtate much to you; on the

conduct of it, and the increaſed calamities that are likely in future to attend it, I ſhall in my next have an opportunity of obſerving. Of the immediate effect of the diſſolution of the Whig party, we have had ſome ſmall ſpecimens. In the unparalleled proviſion of the traitorous correſpondence bill; in the doctrines held relative to voluntary contributions, and the admitting of foreign troops; in the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act, we feel its effects. What will be the ultimate conſequence it is hardly poſſible to ſay; but there is no one can ſee with indifference—none who have reflected ſeriouſly on the nature of the government of this country, without dread, indeed—*party*, the only engine which enabled you to combine all the paſſions and feelings of men, in aid of public virtue againſt that prevalent venality generated by the practice of our conſtitution, ſo weakened and diminiſhed at a moment

moment when corruption is enabled to make its moſt dangerous efforts—" when its mo-
" dern improved arts, by contracts, ſubſcrip-
" tions, and jobs, is attended with this per-
" verſe and vexatious conſequence, that their
" benefit is not only unconnected with that of
" the nation, but grows under diſtreſs; when
" thoſe around the Miniſter* feed on the ex-
" pence, and fatten on every extravagance
" that art and ill conduct can engraft on the
" natural diſadvantages of remote, raſh, ill-
" fated, impolitic and unſucceſsful war; and
" when the Miniſter's direct intereſt requires
" him to purſue a deſperate game, and even
" in ſelf-defence to increaſe that very expence
" which is his crime; to entrench himſelf
" ſtill deeper in corruption, and by headlong

* It is believed, that the fees upon the treaties and the commiſſions have increaſed the emoluments of ſome of the Offices of State to an extent of which there is no experience.

" and

" and unmeaſured extravagance to have the " means of juſtifying to the faithful Com- " mons the events which his plans have oc- " caſioned."

There is one conſequence, however, which from all this muſt but too ſurely follow, more particularly if it is true, that there is at this moment a diſinclination to ſubordination.—As long as public virtue diſtinguiſhed the Miniſters and ſurrounded the Throne, the libels of a Paine might be regarded with indifference; but when the firſt favours of the Court involve uniformly a dereliction of principle upon the part of the man who receives them, then it is that, if there exiſts any thing like virtue in the community, it muſt take from thoſe around the King the regard of the People.—When honours are ſeldom acquired, but with the loſs of character,

racter, then it is that they generate contempt more than they command reſpect.—— When public virtue is no longer to be found amongſt public men, then it is that public inſtitutions can no longer obtain that reverence the welfare of the community requires.

The ſituation of affairs, in whatever point of view they are conſidered, offers, it muſt be acknowledged, but a melancholy and gloomy proſpect to the eye. It cannot be ſuppoſed, that a perſon can feel otherwiſe than in a degree diſguſted with all political purſuits, when he reflects that thoſe he had for years fondly hoped would have been the inſtruments of the ſalvation of the country, have been the means of bringing it into its preſent ſituation—when he knows not whether moſt to deplore the reduction, and in a manner the annihilation

of the party he has ſupported, or the fatal effects of the meaſures to which its deſtruction has led. There remains to me, however, one ſatisfaction, that of thinking that as an individual I have conducted myſelf firmly, honeſtly, and conſcientiouſly. Prudently for my perſonal views, in the ſenſe of the word ariſing out of the corruption of the country, I pretend not to have acted; by the dictates of ſound wiſdom it would be preſumption in me to ſay I have been guided; but to the merit of conſiſtency I muſt put in my claim; and I may venture, I think, to aſſert, that what was in me the effect of early conviction, has been now for many years the uniform ſource of my political action.

In that line I muſt perſevere:—reduced as the party with which I act is in numbers, ſtill I for one ſhall never deſpair: in the juſtice of

of our cauſe I feel our ſtrength; in the talents and abilities of thoſe with whom I have the honour to act, our main ſupport.

It is our object to recover to this country the bleſſings of tranquillity and peace; we wiſh to put an end to the irritation of the public mind; we look with anxiety to the reſtitution of the mild practice of Engliſh law; we wiſh not to hazard the bleſſings we enjoy in a conteſt with what we are taught to conſider the miſeries of France.

To obtain theſe points, however deſirable and neceſſary for the country, may be difficult, but I truſt not impoſſible; the public mind muſt in time be undeceived; reflection muſt operate a change in the opinions of men; it cannot be long ere the people will begin to think what they can gain! and what they may loſe!

Southend, October 7, 1794.

LETTER

LETTER III.

I HAVE already laid before you what appear to me to have been the real cauſes of our preſent unfortunate ſituation; I have ſubmitted to your conſideration the principles that, in my mind, have guided the conduct of Miniſters; and I have endeavoured to ſhew you, that no regard to the public, but an attention to private and particular intereſts, has led us on from ſtep to ſtep to the preſent ſcene of accumulated diſtreſs. It now remains to give you a view of our preſent and future proſpects; and as I have explained my paſt, ſo will I now ſhortly conſider what muſt be my future line of political conduct, which, as it is guided chiefly by principle, no change of circumſtances

circumſtances can materially affect, and no unforeſeen occurrence can greatly alter. Eaſy and ſimple indeed will this laſt taſk prove, when compared with the difficulty of conjecturing any poſſible mode in which the preſent Miniſters can with honour extricate themſelves or their country from the unheard-of and unſurmountable calamities in which we are involved. The proſperity of the country might perhaps under different men, and by purſuing different meaſures, ſtill be preſerved; but for Miniſters to undo every thing they have done, to unſay all they have aſſerted for theſe laſt two years, is impracticable; to diſentangle themſelves from the trammels of their own toils, ſimply impoſſible. Of any change, however, there is at preſent no appearance; with a ſuperior degree of art and ſubtilty the Miniſters have made common cauſe between themſelves and the country; they have hitherto ſuc-

ceeded in dragging both into the ſame laby-rinth, and the future condition of this once powerful kingdom is now only to be learnt by an inveſtigation of thoſe principles that are moſt likely to actuate the conduct of its Miniſters.

This conſideration then is of the graveſt import, and it becomes us much, ſeriouſly to reflect upon the different motives that will probably influence the various ſprings that are likely to give elaſticity to the future operations of the component parts of the preſent adminiſtration.

That terror of innovation, and dread of the extenſion of French principles, have from the beginning of the preſent conteſt uniformly guided the policy of Burlington Houſe and its adherents, is a fact that I preſume no one will attempt to controvert. Fear

then is evidently the cauſe from which they have acted. The effect it has produced is the war with France. And it of courſe naturally follows, that, as with the ſucceſſes of France the original cauſe will increaſe, ſo, as their fears gain ſtrength, their avidity for war muſt proportionably augment; a dreadful ſituation indeed, placing us in this ſingular dilemma, that, when peace becomes indiſpenſably neceſſary, then ſhall our executive government be moſt fixed in their determination to continue the war; when the ability no longer exiſts of carrying it on at all, then ſhall we reſolve to carry it on with the greateſt vigour. As fear acts upon individuals, ſo muſt this political terror ultimately act upon the ſtate; for if in attempting to eſcape a danger we frequently plunge headlong into it, ſo, upon their own principles, if they perſevere in their preſent conduct, what they regard as the means of

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their ſafety muſt become the agent of their deſtruction.

Fatal, however, as the operation of this principle muſt ever prove, by it they have been ſolely guided, and, true to their fears alone, they firſt deſerted every former connexion, and at length have involved themſelves in a ſituation where the aſſertion of any conſtitutional principle would be in itſelf nugatory and ridiculous. So long as they gave an independent ſupport to government, they might, with conſiſtency, reſiſt any meaſure they conceived to have an unconſtitutional tendency. Their ſupport of the war might be uniform, and their regard to conſtitutional principles at the ſame time maintained; but from the moment they went into office, they at once placed themſelves in the power of the Miniſter. To ſtrengthen his hands, to enable him to carry on the war

with additional vigour, they came into place; to reſign upon their own grounds afterwards is impoſſible, in as much as by weakening the executive government they act againſt their only remaining principle for which all others have already been abandoned. To affect independence would therefore be abſurd. They cannot be blind to their ſituation; they muſt feel that the Miniſter ſtill holds in his hands the powerful means by which he forced them with humiliation into office, and that a repetition of its exertion muſt at any time reduce them to paſſive obedience.

In the proſecution of the war alone, they can have a voice; in every other point, on every other ſubject, the mandate of Mr. Pitt muſt be the rule of their conduct.

But is this mere ſpeculation? Do we not already

already ſee a complete proof of this poſition in the difficulty they have found of carrying through the ſtipulations they made previous to accepting office? It is needleſs to enter into the pitiful negotiation for perſonal honours to be conferred on himſelf or friends: theſe, if the Duke of Portland could condeſcend to bargain for, at a moment of ſuch magnitude, the Miniſter would naturally and readily grant; it jarred not with his intereſts, it flattered perhaps his hopes of expoſing them.—But let us attend to the great point his Grace is ſaid to have ſtipulated for—the government of Ireland. That he ſhould feel it deſirable and fitting, in the moment of deſerting his own political friends in England, to demand a ſimilar ſacrifice from Mr. Pitt of his friends in Ireland, is not aſtoniſhing: that he who had yielded the uncontrouled ſway in Great Britain to the Miniſter, ſhould wiſh to poſ-

ſeſs ſimilar power in Ireland, is moſt natural; and that he underſtood it to be given up to him, is moſt certain.

How far this ſtipulation will ever be completely carried into effect, it is impoſſible to foreſee: but as the negotiations concerning it have, for months paſt, exhibited one of the moſt ridiculous and diſguſting ſcenes that has, even in the preſent æra, marked the hiſtory of the country *, ſo the

* It has not been the leaſt entertaining of the many ſingular occurrences that now daily happen, to have obſerved the progreſs of this difference betwixt the Duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt. Their adherents on both ſides have with equal obſtinacy aſſerted, on the one hand that the original ſtipulation was acquieſced in, and the certainty of reſignation, unleſs it is carried into effect, has been publicly avowed: on the other, that the whole has proceeded from miſtake, and the Miniſter's correſpondence with Lord Weſtmorland is brought forward

the ultimately conceding a reluctant half ſhews in the ſtrongeſt point of view the complete incapacity of the adherents of Burlington-Houſe now to demand or enforce any thing.

From this quarter, then, the country have nothing to expect; in vain do they look for any proſpect of a reſtoration of tranquillity; the operation of alarm is their only ſource of action, and the effect of that operation

forward to cheer the hopes of his adherents in Ireland. We have ſeen Mr. Secretary Douglas making arrangements for reſuming his ſituation, at the moment another perſon was accepting his place from the Duke of Portland; we have ſeen Earl Fitzwilliam preparing to go, Lord Weſtmorland determined to ſtay. It is now, however, confidently ſaid, that Lord Fitzwilliam is to go, and that Mr. Pitt has preſerved his friends in their ſituations; an arrangement as little calculated to ſatisfy expectant Chancellors, &c. at Burlington-Houſe, as it is to afford a permanent ſecurity for any

operation neceſſarily involves a diſregard and neglect of every other principle and opinion whatſoever.

In contemplating the Miniſter, and the probable line the motives that have regulated his conduct will induce him to purſue, our hopes are equally gloomy. Guided more, as I have ſtated at length in my laſt letter, by perſonal motives than any other cauſe, and having ſucceeded beyond his moſt ſanguine expectation in the object of his ſolicitude; having divided the party he dreaded; having placed himſelf at the head of that very ariſtocracy he originally trampled on,

ſubſtantial change of principle in the government of Ireland.—Is it to be ſuppoſed that Lord Fitzwilliam can have any real confidence in Lord Fitzgibbon and his friends, or that Mr. Burne and Mr. Keogh can ever receive any boon, however deſirable in itſelf, with complacency from that quarter?

and

and in ſome degree deſerted the cauſe of thoſe who originally contributed to placing him in power; is it to be imagined he will eaſily forego what he has taken ſuch pains to acquire, or that he will ſoon relinquiſh what he has purchaſed at ſo dear a rate?

To effect his original purpoſe, he ſacrificed the peace of the kingdom; and to retain the perſonal benefit he derived from it, a continuation of the ſacrifice is neceſſary. Great as the price is that one party pays to him, he too muſt yield ſomewhat to them. If they ſacrifice to him the conſtitution, he muſt concede to them the peace of the country. Such is exactly the tenor of their bond—the country between both is totally forgotten; and to gratify the inordinate ambition of one party, to quiet the feminine dreads of another, the obvious intereſts of

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the community are to be neglected, our beſt blood and laſt treaſure expended, and the ſad calamities of lengthened war heaped on this devoted nation.

But to this line of conduct other conſiderations muſt equally lead the Miniſter and his friends; for, ſimilar as the conteſt is in many other points to the American, in this it is moſt fatally alike—that at the commencement of both we equally out-ſtepped every fair and conſiderate bound of diſcretion, by declaring at once the only terms on which peace could be re-eſtabliſhed. There, unconditional ſubmiſſion was to be inſiſted on; here, the overturning of the Jacobin government is aſſerted. I ſpeak not now of the ſupreme folly of the idea in either inſtance; but I ſhould have thought that the experience of the fatal conſequences that attended the practice of it on the former occaſion,

would have rendered the adoption of it on the latter impoſſible.

In the grave hour of conſidering the probable iſſue of uncertain war, calmneſs and reſolution mark the conduct of a wiſe Miniſter; he elevates not his own expectation, or that of his country, beyond the well founded hopes ariſing from preſent vigour and immediate exertion; in them he ſees the only ſource and ſure road to returning tranquillity and an advantageous peace; he aſſerts not what muſt depend on accident, but endeavours to act ſo as to come up to the expectation of the moſt ſanguine. Intemperance and paſſion form no part of his character, they give no ſway to his conduct: unfortunately however for us, whether through miſtaken policy or weakneſs, theſe have now for two wars been our

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ſole guides. In both, the Miniſters began where they ought to have concluded; in both, they looked not for ſucceſs as generating an end, but ſtated the end to which they were to bring their ſucceſs; and in both, they, unhappily for the country, early pledged their perſonal character and reputation to points probably impoſſible to be attained, and certainly at all events out of the power of man to inſure.

The conqueſt of France, or the counteracting by arms the declared will of twenty-five millions of men in a ſtate of revolutionary enthuſiaſm, might have appalled the boldeſt politicians. They, however, in proportion to the magnitude of the object, inſtead of caution, one would conceive from their conduct, have judged raſhneſs neceſſary. Pledges were to be made—hopes held out

out to delude and deceive the people, who ultimately, through the vice of the Government and the arts of the Miniſter, dragged in to ſupport his chimerical ideas, irritated by declamation, and maddened by an appeal to the paſſions, brought themſelves to imagine they ſaw, in the greatneſs of the attempt, a ſure proof of the talents of the projector—in the vaſtneſs of the idea, a certainty of genius adaquate to its completion. Miſerably indeed have they been deceived: our ability to carry it on—our Miniſter's adequacy to conducting it, are now before the public. But the melancholy folly of this our original conduct cannot now be got the better of. Whatever may be our ſituation, our pride and our honour ſtill urge us forward; our Miniſter's character and reputation are at ſtake; and, to ſave our own and his credit, whatever may now

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be our opinion of the impoſſibility of ſucceſs, new treaſure is to be ſpent, and more blood ſpilt.

When in the mind of every thinking man the American war was deſperate, what, from the ſituation in which Lord North had placed himſelf and the public, was the conſequence? New expectation was to be raiſed, and different meaſures purſued. This General was to be ſacrificed, and ſome new plan to be adopted. The public hopes were by theſe means flattered; the people found a temporary relief from the conſciouſneſs of their own follies; till at laſt experience taught them this fatal leſſon, that all Generals were alike, that every plan was equally ruinous, the original attempt was in the eye of reaſon ridiculous, and every ſubſequent effort proved but the truth of that which wiſdom ought at firſt to have taught them.

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At preſent, too fatal a reſemblance appears; from ſimilar cauſes ſimilar effects are enſuing. Generals may be changed, meaſures may be varied; but the ultimate end of the fatal deluſion will too ſurely be found in aggravated diſappointment and additional failure.

To carry it on, however, is for Mr. Pitt's perſonal character neceſſary; in him every feeling muſt lead to the deſperate proſecution of it: he knows that nothing ſhort of ruin can apologize for his treating; and even to the ruin of his country he muſt now look for the preſervation of his character and his continuance in power.

But let us not, even in this laſt ſtage of calamity, flatter ourſelves;—in his conſcious incapacity to treat, we may anticipate with melancholy certainty the ſure cauſe of protracted

hoſtility;

hoſtility: the habit of ſacrificing principle to convenience may indeed induce the Miniſter to make a piece of miſerable patch-work of his character; but he, and thoſe connected with him, muſt ſee that every conſideration of policy and wiſdom precludes the poſſibility of his treating with ſucceſs. The inſtant he makes the attempt, by analyſing his political character as a man, and his conduct as a miniſter, the whole of our ſituation will ſtand unveiled to our enemy. They muſt know that neceſſity, not choice, dictates the meaſure. They muſt feel that want of ability to carry on the war, and not a wiſh to re-eſtabliſh tranquillity, leads to the propoſal; they muſt ſee that fear of them, and not love of peace, actuates his conduct. In the very propoſal they will beſt diſcern the extent of their victories; in the paſt language and conduct of miniſters they will alone be able to form

a commenſurate view of their preſent ſtrength, and our humiliation. It would be laying the country at the feet of France, and ſtating in the plaineſt characters, that any terms muſt be accepted, becauſe no reſiſtance could any longer be made.

But we cannot ſuppoſe the French ſo blind in their diſcernments, as not to have marked the political character of the man: it requires not their ingenuity to diſcover that the depth of his neceſſitous ſubmiſſion will be proportionate to the extent of his original arrogance and folly. Can we believe for a moment, that they are ſo loſt to the remembrance of even his recent policy, as not to obſerve, that in the conduct of the wary Empreſs of the North there is a rule and a guide laid down for their adoption? In treating with him, will they not imagine that it

is but to refuſe, and new conceſſions muſt be made? that it is only to deny, and freſh ſubmiſſion muſt enſue? The ſacrifice of character, and of what he ſtated to be the intereſt of the nation, *to her*, will inſure the conceſſion of our deareſt intereſts *to them*; and if in the year 1791, to preſerve his place, the Miniſter made light of the honour of his country—when he attempts to treat, in the ſituation to which he has now reduced us, he will learn the conſequence of ſuch conduct, by the ſolid and calamitous ſacrifices he will be obliged to make—ſacrifices not made more to neceſſity, than to his paſt and preſent impolicy and ambition. It will unfortunately, however, not be even neceſſary for them to look back to this memorable event; it is the nature of man to demand what he conceives would have been aſked; and in the ſubmiſſions that Mr. Pitt would have forced upon France, we may form a

competent judgment of the terms that he will have it in his power to make.

Whether then we conſider the Miniſters in a body, or look at their ſeparate views as dictating their general conduct, there appears not in either caſe the ſmalleſt chance of peace; and when we reflect on the futility of the grounds on which they and their adherents maintain the neceſſity of war, as it convinces us of their determination to perſevere, ſo it ſhews equally the perſonal motives and views that actuate them.

In the preſent ſtate of things, to hold out even a remote chance of ultimate ſucceſs is totally impoſſible. *With whom are you to treat?* is therefore the great point to which they reſort—wiſely, I grant, for their purpoſes—though its ſolution is eaſily forced back upon themſelves by the ſimple queſ-

tion, *With whom are you at war?* And if there are any to whom this can appear not completely concluſive, let them for a moment reflect *For what we are at war.* Avowedly for the deſtruction of the Jacobin government of France. The very acknowledgment of our object is then a complete anſwer to the queſtion. If we once confeſs that we cannot obtain our end, it involves the natural concluſion, that the diſſolution of a government being the end, and it having failed, a government remains with whom we may treat. But our object is ſtated to be, to deſtroy, not to form a government. Looking then, if we can, to a ſucceſsful termination, the fact will whimſically be, that when we have attained the object of our purſuit, then, and then only, ſhall we be exactly in the ſituation in which it is now ſtated to be impracticable for us to treat; and the only time we ſhall have nothing

thing to treat with at all, will be the very moment when, according to the ſtatement of Miniſters, peace ought to be made—their object in the war being attained.

Beyond this doctrine of deſtroying the preſent government, Miniſters have never yet ventured to go: nor for their purpoſes was it neceſſary; for it muſt be obvious to every one, if they were to ſucceed in that object, peace could not be made till a new government was formed;—in its formation, they who deſtroyed the laſt muſt of courſe have a leading ſhare: and thus, had they ſucceeded, at the very cloſe of the war, though Miniſters from the firſt never dared to avow their original and true object, it would have ultimately reſulted as the natural conſequence of the meaſures they purſued. The farce of overturning a government would be dropped to the ground, and

the plan of forcing a government on a people ſtruggling for freedom in *their* idea, and determined to be free, would ſtand forward in all its original and native deformity.

But the diſguſt naturally excited in every generous boſom by many of the recent ſcenes in France, a horror at thoſe who were the actors on that bloody theatre, and an apprehenſion of a diminution of our dignity as a people, ſhould we treat with a Jacobin Banditti, as it is called, as they contributed to involve us, have, I am well aware, come much in aid of this ſtrange and abſurd difficulty. How far our own conduct may have in part occaſioned the very ſcenes we deplore, and the very horrors we deprecate, I have avoided entering upon; but I ſhould wiſh thoſe in whom humanity takes ſuch a lead, who feel ſo much for the diſtreſſes of a foreign country,

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to look a little to our domeſtic ſituation; to conſider to what a continuation of the ſtruggle muſt tend; to think of the effect of increaſing burthens; to reflect on the loſs morality muſt ſuffer; to contemplate the gloomy ſcenes the Continent daily exhibits; and then let them decide, whether a ſpirit of hatred and revenge againſt the French Government ſhould in wiſdom induce us to be cruel to ourſelves; and whether a deteſtation of their barbarity ſhould in prudence guide us to ultimate miſery, and poſſibly to final ruin.

To thoſe dignified perſons who may wiſh to ſacrifice every ſolid benefit to falſe pride, let me be permitted to put this common queſtion—With whom did you treat in the American war? And they muſt anſwer with me, —*With proſcribed Rebels and a vagabond Congreſs.* Let them go a little further back, and they will find (pride and arrogance yield-

ing to neceſſity and policy) the haughty and inſolent bigot of Spain, at the very moment of canonizing the murderer of one of the greateſt and beſt Princes Europe ever ſaw, forego the object of his early ambition by a virtual declaration of the independence of the United Provinces. Let them reflect that, in both thoſe memorable inſtances, the language was the ſame; ideas ſimilar to thoſe of the preſent day at both periods prevailed. Let experience be their guide, and let them then determine, whether, to ſupport a ſtandard of ideal conſequence, they are willing to hazard the continuation of the miſeries of war, and the bloodſhed of thouſands. But this unſurmountable bar to peace has always appeared to me to originate from a very different, though obvious cauſe. Whenever ſucceſs became doubtful, the mind was naturally led to look forward to peace; the oſtenſible difficulty, *With whom can you treat?* was then artfully brought forward,

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but in reality only as a veil to the real conſideration of *Who in this country can treat with advantage to the nation, and honour to themſelves?* Here at once you find a ſolution of all their clamour—an explanation of the whole of the difficulty.—To keep back this laſt conſideration, the firſt muſt be rendered in the minds of the people unconquerable. When once you get over it, the anxiety for peace will be augmented by the road to it becoming apparent; but either the character and conſiſtency or the power of the Miniſter muſt be annihilated. To preſerve both will then be impoſſible; for if the wiſh of the people be once with energy expreſſed, and he refuſes to treat, there is an end of the laſt. If he conſents to make peace, he bids adieu to the firſt: one of them he muſt give up. But extinguiſh from the memory of all, the paſt promiſes and pledges; blot from the recollection of the public, the conduct Mr. Pitt and his adherents have adopted;

adopted; enable them to treat, reſerving their places and power, with that ſcanty pittance of conſiſtency and character ſtill neceſſary for public men; give them but the moſt diſtant opportunity of anſwering the queſtion, *Whocan treat?* by ſaying, *We can*; the weight of the firſt difficulty will in their eſtimation inſtantly ſink to the ground; this formidable bar to our happineſs will diſappear; and thoſe who in the hour of arrogance were ever readieſt to calumniate and revile, would, in the moment of ultimate misfortune, be the firſt to acknowledge and to treat with the preſent government of France.

In further ſupport of this doctrine, a doubt of the exiſting rulers in that country treating with you is conſtantly inſinuated; a point that in all ſimilar ſituations muſt ever remain doubtful till the experiment be made. And why it ſhould not now ſucceed

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as well as in any former war, I own I am at a loſs to ſee. That they have anxiouſly courted peace ſince hoſtilities commenced, the public are aware of; and that they would not now treat we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe, unleſs, judging of them by ourſelves, we conceive them to be guided by ſimilar prejudices, by the ſame averſion to our government that we have profeſſed to theirs; and by like intereſted motives on the part of thoſe who take the lead in the management of their affairs.

But even allowing it to be true, it can be no reaſon for not making the attempt: —by that, if made with dignity, we can ſuffer no loſs. It may indeed be humiliating to make peace on diſgraceful terms; but it never can be diſgraceful to offer peace on honourable terms. If it fails, all doubt of the right in the conteſt is at an end; it gives us the aid of certain juſtice and neceſſity, and the very

very failure will give new ſtrength to our meaſures—new vigour to our arms.

But this ſuppoſition of averſion to peace is in fact another mode of diverting the mind from the impoſſibility of the preſent Miniſters' offering to treat. It is not the reaſon of the thing, but the neceſſity of ſupporting it for their own purpoſes, that leads them to urge this prepoſterous doubt.

Not only therefore the ſeparate and united intereſts of the Miniſters, but the very difficulties they ſtart, muſt lead us to the melancholy conviction, that it is their deſperate determination to proſecute the war to the laſt extremity. To continue it with ſucceſs under the preſent circumſtances of things, cannot, I am convinced, be ſupported by any conſiderate or reflecting perſon. It is a dream perhaps reſerved for the

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warm and juvenile imagination of thoſe who have ſo frequently anticipated the glory of the Allies in the capture of Paris. With them however I ſhall not contend. If they can bring themſelves ſtill to credit the poſſibility of our carrying on the conteſt with a chance of advantage, their inveterate obſtinacy may be a matter of aſtoniſhment to ſome: but it muſt ultimately be a ſubject of grief to all, that, in a time of imminent danger and public diſtreſs, the raſh and ill-digeſted chimeras of ſuch politicians ſhould, for a moment, from their perſonal connections, and the ſupport they have met with in Parliament, be ſuſpected to bear any affinity to the matured judgment of the reſponſible Miniſters of the country.

Of the people whatever may be the ſentiments, they will now be but ſlowly and with difficulty expreſſed. Accuſtom-

ed for years to have a ſtrong party in the country ready to ſupport their intereſts and to forward their views, in its diſſolution they have found, to their coſt, the loſs of their own energy and of their own ſtrength. They muſt naturally be diffident in proportion to the weakneſs of thoſe who ſupport them; and when they look on one hand to the apparent ſtrength of Miniſters, on the other to the deſperate domeſtic uſes made of it, neceſſity and prudence equally lead them to be ſilent.—From the ſmall but ſteady and concentrated body of men who in either Houſe of Parliament ſtill venture to oppoſe the meaſures of the Miniſter, little can be immediately hoped for. Theirs indeed is a difficult taſk. Influence, corruption, calumny, fear, prejudice, and pride, are all acting againſt them in their fulleſt vigour, and to the greateſt extent. Steady, perſevering, and determined, they will no doubt

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ſhew themſelves to their purpoſe; but remote and diſtant is the cure they unaided by the public voice can adminiſter.

There appears therefore no where any cheering gleam of immediate hope, that flatters us with a poſſible ceſſation of the preſent calamities, or gives a proſpect of returning tranquillity. When we inveſtigate the feelings and view the conduct of his Majeſty's preſent Miniſters, we unfortunately ſee with great certainty, that nothing but a continuation of hoſtilities is to be expected: in them, honour, intereſt and prejudice combine to puſh on the conteſt.

For this then we muſt make up our minds, and it is moſt neceſſary we ſhould arm ourſelves with fortitude and reſolution. Every man muſt feel, that by this perſeverance we riſk our own fate; that in endeavouring to

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overturn the anarchy of France we hazard the fair form of our own conſtitution. Every one muſt now be convinced, that the efforts of France are alone to be repelled by means equally powerful.—We may turn the commander in chief of our army into an auctioneer of military commiſſions, and ſo add to our number when we diminiſh the real ſtrength of our eſtabliſhment; we may levy the annual ſupply, by entailing beggary and wretchedneſs on our poſterity; we may go on debauching the morals of the country by turning the minds of the induſtrious to military purſuits; we may continue to encourage unconſtitutional benevolences; we may go on addreſſing the Crown, and promiſing ſupport; our Miniſters may vent their impotent Philippics in parliament, and mutilated Gazettes may be ſent forth to cheer the ſinking ſpirits of the country. But let us not deceive ourſelves. Such and other

other ordinary means will be as impotent, as unavailing. The military character of all Europe already lies proſtrate at the feet of French Enthuſiaſm, and till we employ means ſimilar to thoſe they have adopted reſiſtance will be uſeleſs. To repel their armies, ſimilar armies muſt be found; to reſiſt their force, ſimilar force muſt be produced. Let us therefore not completely ſhut our eyes to our real ſituation. If war is to be proſecuted, to make it ſucceſsful French means muſt be purſued. Let us not talk of our Conſtitution; for before we can act on equal terms with them it muſt be, in ſubſtance, deſtroyed; every man muſt by compulſion become a ſoldier; every ſhilling of individual property muſt become public ſtock; our lives and fortunes muſt be in a ſtate of requiſition; and the Britiſh Cabinet muſt become a Committee of Public Safety.

From ſuch efforts only are we to look for ſucceſs; but to ſuch, thank God! even Mr. Pitt cannot reſort. But are we ſtill to be dragged on, every military judge in Europe having declared the impoſſibility of ſucceſs? Deſerted by many of thoſe powers originally moſt ſanguine in the cauſe, are we to continue parrying in the beſt manner we can the fatal blows of our enemies; conſoling ourſelves in the ultimate reflection, that a branch of the ſea divides us from the Continent; and loſing ſight of Holland, that miſerable country we have ruined with our protection? In this undoubtedly our Miniſters may perſevere; but if they do, we cannot but ſuſpect they look for their ſafety to the approach of the melancholy period when all other conſiderations muſt be ſet aſide, when all political prejudices muſt be forgot, when the preſervation of our own country muſt be our ſole object; when, to protect our

fortunes and families, every exertion muſt be made, every human means employed.—Should this melancholy but not improbable ſituation occur, I am completely ready to grant it is no time to ſtart difficulties with whom you will act, or to enter into conſiderations of former political conduct. We muſt all act, and act together; but to learn who is then fitteſt to guide the laſt and deſperate efforts of our country, we muſt neceſſarily turn our eyes to the paſt conduct of Miniſters in their military capacity, and from that determine how far they are to be truſted at a moment when inſufficiency or neglect muſt end in ſealing the fate of this powerful kingdom. If no part of our preſent ſituation be owing to their miſconduct; if all our failures have been the natural reſult of obvious cauſes; if they have been all along the wiſe and watchful but unfortunate ſervants of the public; in that caſe I am

ready to allow, at a moment ſuch as I have ſtated they ought particularly to be ſupported. But if any part of this ſituation ariſes from their neglect, if it originates from their folly or want of foreſight, we ſhould be committing the worſt of ſuicides any longer to confide in them. And as this is a point of much and deep import to our future preſervation, I hope I may be pardoned if I ſubmit to you, with the diffidence due by one not verſant in military affairs, a ſhort view of their paſt military conduct.

There is no failing ſo great, and at the ſame time poſſibly ſo common in this country, as the inclination we generally feel to undervalue the character of our enemies. The principle from which this feeling ariſes, however much in itſelf commendable, has, in its effects, unfortunately but too often proved fatal to our military ſucceſs; and of

this the American war is a true but melancholy example. It then actuated alike the army and the ſenate, our miniſters and our generals, our councils and our executive operations. It has recorded in hiſtory the Britiſh parliament applauding the abſurdity of overcoming a continent with a handful of grenadiers *. It occaſioned the attack at Bunker's Hill; for to take a fair military advantage of rebels was, by our generals there, reckoned impolitic and unneceſſary †.

It

* Vide General Grant's ſpeech in the Houſe of Commons.

† It muſt be generally known that the works at Bunker's Hill were thrown up in one night, on a peninſula. The poſſeſſion of the paſs naturally enſured the ſurrender of the troops occupying that poſt, in the courſe of two days at fartheſt; and the circumſtance of our being enabled to attack it with the tide in our favour, by means of the very boats we afterwards landed from,

It then uniformly guided all our councils; and not even the firſt and ſevere leſſon we received at Boſton could hinder us from attempting the diſaſtrous attack of Charlestown, the ſubſequent expedition under General Burgoyne, or the laſt and deciſive enterpriſe of the Marquis Cornwallis. The hiſtory of that war is a recital of expedients to remedy unforeſeen events; the hiſtory of the government of that day is a tale of accumulated diſappointment proceeding from unfair and arrogant expectation. The miniſters and their generals raiſed an imaginary ſtandard of the energy of the people againſt whom they were to act; and their

gave the moſt complete ſecurity to the attempt. But the appearance of management was ſuppoſed to convey the idea of fear. An inhabitant of America, even behind works, and fighting for liberty, never could be imagined to reſiſt our regular troops. They were attacked in their ſtrongeſt point, and the event is matter of public notoriety.

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plans were formed againſt this phantom of their own creation, and not againſt that great, powerful, and temperate continent with which they were contending.

Recent as this example is; deeply as we felt the effects of that ſyſtem of acting; much as it has been deprecated by ſome of the heads of the preſent government, I cannot help thinking that the whole of the conduct of the preſent war ariſes from the ſame fountain; that under-rating our enemies' military character and exertions has been the ſource of all our calamities; that judging of them by an imaginary and not a real ſtandard has been the cauſe of all our failures; and that eſtimating the ſtrength and reſources of the French, not by what they really were, but by what we wiſhed them to be, has been the origin of all our difficulties, and of our preſent ruinous ſituation. In vain may we

turn round for any ſemblance of ſyſtem or plan ſince the beginning of the war; in vain may we look for any appearance of calm deliberation and ſyſtematic energy in the cabinet:—of hurry and confuſion we have ſufficient proofs; of inadequate expedients to remedy unforeſeen diſaſters, examples ſufficient; but of ſyſtem or of plan, the bread and ſtaff of war, not a veſtige is to be ſeen.

The ſituation of the French in Holland at the commencement of the war, might, I am ready to grant, render an immediate exertion for the relief of that country neceſſary; and the exigency of the caſe might fairly be allowed to preclude any poſſibility of concerting a fixed and ſettled plan for the enſuing campaign. Aid was accordingly ſent, too trifling indeed to enſure any thing but ruin, had it been the only hope of our

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ally: ſhortly after, however, and moſt fortunately, the victorious arms of Clairfayt and the Prince of Cobourg drove the French within the limits of their own territory; which was in fact, to us, the fair and legitimate end of one war, and the ſubſequent operations the commencement of another.

The conſideration of what was the ſureſt and ſpeedieſt mode of making a ſolid impreſſion in the interior of France, muſt at this period have become the ſole object of military inveſtigation in the cabinet; the neceſſity of defence was at an end, and offenſive meaſures to be immediately adopted. Here a variety of points were to be taken into view. The nature of our continental connections was of importance to be conſidered; the real ſituation of our enemy, and the exact means we had to apply to any given end, were equally points moſt carefully to be attended to.

The

The number of our alliances at this time muſt, I preſume, have ſolely depended on our wiſh to extend them. All the ſtates of Europe ſaw with jealouſy, moſt with horror, and not a few with fear, the changes that had lately taken place in France; and when they contemplated the military array of Auſtria and Pruſſia in the field, to declare poſitively againſt her was by them too generally, at that time, conſidered as merely giving way to their feelings, and partaking of certain ſucceſs. The ſtate of our enemy, too, certainly held out proſpects flattering in the higheſt degree to our wiſhes. The fate of the unfortunate Louis had already marked the downfall of the timid but enlightened Briſſotin miniſtry; every day they were drawing nearer to their end; and the violence of their adverſaries for a time apparently precluded all appearance of union and combination. The ſeeds of civil war were ſpread throughout

throughout France, and daily ſcenes of carnage and murder were for months exhibited in the richeſt plains of that delightful climate. Their army too was completely diſorganiſed; the deſpondency of defeat had ſucceeded to the animation of victory; their favourite General had proved himſelf a traitor to their cauſe; all confidence and energy was completely annihilated; even the appearance of an army in the field hardly any where exiſted. Our own means, it muſt be allowed, were, as they always have been at the commencement of every war, inadequate to any very extenſive ſcale of operation; but if our troops were few in numbers, they were ſtill formidable from the diſcipline of the men, and the experience of our officers. Under theſe circumſtances two different ſyſtems might have been adopted; the one, to join the Britiſh army to that of Prince Cobourg,

bourg, which already with our ſubſidized mercenaries was about to act on the northern frontier of France; the other, to have, in conjunction with our fleet, employed the whole of our force on the coaſt of France.

The experience of paſt wars ought, one naturally would have imagined, to have made in favour of the laſt; much and ſerious alarm had frequently been given to the French government by expeditions of the kind; and the neceſſity of protecting their own ſhore has frequently tended to ſtop the progreſs of their ſucceſsful arms, even in the centre of Germany. The internal convulſions in France ſeemed to point out the obvious propriety of this line of acting: nor could it be imagined that thoſe only would forget to give due weight to this leading point, who were conſtantly cheering the hopes

hopes of the country by inflammatory declamation on this head. Yet ſuch ſeems really to have been the caſe. What ought to have ſtimulated Miniſters to an invaſion of France had no weight; and, inſtead of attempting thus to give energy to the opinion of the diſaffected, they appear to have come to the reſolution of deſpiſing all opinion, even when in their favour, and of truſting to the deſperate iſſue of arms only for their ſucceſs. The ſmallneſs of the body of Engliſh troops has been ſtated as a reaſon for the line they adopted; the inſufficiency of the national force, at that period, to any great undertaking formed their principal defence. But it is clear that this is entirely a queſtion of a comparative nature, and here the very ſmallneſs of the force appears to make againſt their poſition.

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That a limited ſervice can only be expected from a ſmall body, muſt be granted; but it is alſo obvious, that in an army of a certain magnitude the addition of a ſmall corps is hardly perceptible; whereas a ſmall corps acting ſeparately, and with appropriate energy, has frequently rendered eſſential ſervice even to the large army.—The queſtion therefore ſeems to ſtand thus: Whether the ſmall force that could be provided was of greateſt uſe by joining the large army of the Prince de Cobourg? or, Whether, by acting ſeparately with our fleet, it would not in fact have given greater ſtrength to that very army? Whether ten thouſand men hovering or landing on the coaſt of France, would not have forwarded that General's views more than they did by acting with him? and, Whether, above all, it would not only have aided his views, but would have tended, if any thing could,

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to produce a revolution of opinion, from which principally early peace was to be looked for, out of which chiefly returning tranquillity was to be expected?—I would aſk too, which way our troops, excellent as I allow them to be, were likely to act with greateſt effect, under the protecting influence of our commanding navy, or as a corps in a German army? Whether as an Engliſh army commanded by Engliſh generals, and acting ſolely for Britiſh intereſts, or as a German corps acting for intereſts by them little underſtood, and poſſibly leſs reliſhed? Whether, in ſhort, from our own troops moſt was naturally to be expected, when the fruits of their victories were to benefit their country, and their laurels to adorn the ſon of their Sovereign; or when the benefit of their labours was to be ſhared by German ſtates, and divided among German deſpots?

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All theſe conſiderations had, however, no effect at this period on the Britiſh Cabinet; a different mode of procedure was adopted, different meaſures purſued; the moment for ſuch an undertaking was forever loſt: and though at a future period, and under leſs favourable circumſtances, we have been told (with what truth is now pretty clear) the attempt was to be made—ſtill, at the time when alone it held out a rational proſpect of ſucceſs, no ſuch meaſure was adopted.

It indeed may be matter of well-grounded doubt, whether the rapid ſucceſs of the Prince of Cobourg in driving the enemy within their own dominion had not elated the expectation of Miniſters to an extent that rendered in their minds all plan and ſyſtem totally unneceſſary; and whether they did not reſolve to follow that General's footſteps, as the ſure road to eaſy conqueſt,

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and to certain fame. Their tone and manner at the time ſtrongly corroborate this idea; nor will the reflecting part of the community hereafter be much aſtoniſhed at the military inefficiency of thoſe Miniſters, who could have the folly and frontleſs audacity to ſtate at the beginning of their career, that the fact of the embarkation of 1900 men of the guards had given a turn to the ſituation of Europe *.

But whether it was occaſioned by the effect of ill-founded expectation of immediate ſucceſs, or whether it proceeded from what I ſhall ever conceive a moſt fatal error in a matured plan, we know the truth to be, that

* It was broadly aſſerted, by high authority, in both Houſes of Parliament, that the landing of the Guards had been attended with the effect I have mentioned; but the fact is, the original victory of the Auſtrians took place previous to their diſembarkation.

the Britiſh force in Holland, reinforced from England, joined the allied army, and the offenſive campaign againſt France ſoon opened by the blockade of Condé, and the ſiege of Valenciennes. How far this ought to have been made the leading object of the campaign, and whether Liſle would not have been a preferable point of attack, involves a mere military queſtion of detail, into which I ſhall not preſume to enter.

The army had been directed to act in conjunction with the Auſtrian force. If any blame lay in the conduct of that force (which I am far from aſſerting), it belonged to the executive officers excluſively, and cannot in any fairneſs be attributed to our Miniſters.

Our object, however, ſuch as it was, completely ſucceeded. The allied army remained united

united and compact, nor was it long before the gallantry of our own troops, headed by the Duke of York, in puſhing the ſiege of Valenciennes, and the military ſkill diſplayed by the Prince de Cobourg in fruſtrating all the feeble attempts made to throw ſuccour into either place, gave us poſſeſſion of both theſe important towns.

But here unfortunately ended, by an immediate change of the ſyſtem previouſly adopted, not only the ſucceſs of the campaign, but of the war in Europe. Hitherto it had appeared to the military officers entruſted with the command of the army, that acting together in one large compact body was the only line by which either ſecurity or ſucceſs could be relied on. They had adopted it at a time when the French army was diſorganiſed and diſaffected; nor can it for a moment be ſuppoſed, that, in

proportion as their opponents acquired additional ſtrength from their increaſing numbers, and freſh confidence in new generals, they ſhould deviate from the precautionary wiſdom of their former policy.

We muſt therefore look to ſome other quarter for this fatal change; and we are naturally led to turn our eyes to the Cabinet of that country which was to derive the excluſive benefit of the meaſure. It was now the conduct of our Miniſters began to appear in its true colour. Infatuated with paſt ſucceſs, there was no undertaking too deſperate for them to hazard, no ſcheme too daring for them to undertake. The matured experience of the commanders was diſregarded, and to the raſhneſs of their ſpeculations was the ſucceſs of the war, and the ſafety of our army, to be ſacrificed. They even thought all common official exertion

to give effect to the ruinous measures they were concerting, completely unnecessary: and though they must have felt that in proportion to the celerity of the execution the brilliancy of the scheme would appear; though the necessary stores for the siege were meant to be furnished by themselves; yet they were as slow in their preparations to give it effect at home, as they were rash in enforcing its execution abroad. The consequence of such conduct at the time was easily foreseen—the fate of the expedition against Dunkirk was early predicted *. Their plan was, however, by the commander reluctantly adopted; the allied army divided; and, after delays of various kinds, as un-

* I myself heard the officer to whom this country during the present war probably owes most, on seeing the nature of the position the Duke of York was under the necessity of taking, from the inadequacy of his force, predict the event.

pardonable in the executive as in the deliberative character of our Miniſters, the events enſued which are of too painful a nature for me to inſiſt upon.

It is not in hiſtory to afford a ſtronger inſtance of the principle I originally laid down. A complete miſunderſtanding of the force and energy of their enemy, the undervaluing their means and exertion, muſt have led to the deſtructive attempt. They have in their defence held out the idea of being overpowered by a maſs, but the fact does not bear them out *. No troops acted againſt

* The original decree of riſing in a maſs was preſented to the Convention the 23d of Auguſt; the defeat of the covering army at Dunkirk took place the 6th of September. Between theſe two periods it is evidently impoſſible it could have been carried into execution, ſo as to produce any effect. But the doctrine of maſs is a general apology for all our diſaſters. How far it is in

againſt them that they had not grounds to fear might be brought into the field for that

in itſelf true, I have always had ſome doubts. That their armies are numerous we well know; that they have fought with ſucceſs we have all to deplore; but on the long run, I rather apprehend, it will be found that thoſe furious and undiſciplined hordes of Sans Culottes are ſimply large, alert and diſciplined armies, and that their fury is the effect of courage combined with a love of, and a ſenſe of duty to, their country. Allowing it however to be ſo, there is ſurely nothing in it we ought not to have expected. When we view the enthuſiaſm they have diſplayed on every occaſion; when we conſider their general feeling as a people, and their conviction of the nature of the conteſt in which they were embarked; that they ſhould give their money, and offer their lives, cannot be aſtoniſhing. They were only offering a part to preſerve the reſt; they were riſking their lives for what alone renders exiſtence eſtimable. To conceive it involuntary is abſurd, and is contradicted by their uniform conduct in the field, by our total want of intelligence, by their conduct when priſoners, by every practical inſtance that can be adduced.

purpoſe. They have attempted too to aſſert, that even the failure at Dunkirk inſured ſucceſs at Queſnoy and on the Rhine; an idea that cannot require much refutation: for I ſhould humbly conceive no perſon, but a blind and implicit adherer even to the folly of Miniſters, will be found abſurd enough to aſſert it to be a military principle, or even a poſition that common ſenſe can endure, that, inſtead of acting on one point in one large body, and againſt one given object, with nearly a certainty of ſucceſs, it is wiſe by dividing our force to attempt two, and to ſecure the ſucceſs of one by the calamities of defeat in the other. Yet ſuch was preciſely our conduct. Acting in one firm body, as at Valenciennes, againſt either Queſnoy or Dunkirk, the ſucceſs of the allies muſt have been morally certain; acting againſt both it became obviouſly doubtful. The raſh, nay deſperate, attempt

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was made; the hopes of the campaign were completely blasted: and when the intemperance of the times will again allow calm reason to take her natural sway, mankind at large will join in pitying the ignorance, and despising the folly, of that Administration which could for a moment adopt as a plan, against the most powerful military nation in the universe, the generally dangerous and commonly ruinous expedient of acting by detachment in separate corps *.

* It has been generally imagined this plan originated with the Lord Chancellor, whose deep legal knowledge must be presumed from his situation, but of whose military talents doubts may be fairly entertained. I cannot help regretting, however, that he did not upon this occasion apply to our army abroad, what he must have been well acquainted with, the governing principle of his politics at home; for, if in the division of their opponents Ministers have ever found the source of their own power, he might have naturally concluded, that in the division of our army he was laying the foundation of the power and victories of the French.

But

But let us now trace their conduct in the South, where Toulon, having in common with almoſt every other large mercantile and ſea-port town reſiſted the power and deprecated the principles of Robeſpierre and his faction, and having witneſſed the dreadful example made of other cities, at length reſolved to ſeek for ſuccour and protection even in the arms of their enemies. They had entered into a treaty with Lord Hood, which put him in poſſeſſion of the place; and the French fleet in the Mediterranean, that had ſo long ſwept the coaſts of Italy, had by the ſame agreement fallen into his hands. That the Miniſters here could have no previous conception of the poſſibility of ſuch an event happening, is diſtinctly ſeen from the circumſtance of the equipment of the fleet, in which no military officer of any rank was to be found. Their conduct is therefore only to be conſidered in the

conſequent

conſequent ſteps they adopted after they had heard of the ceſſion of that important place, and this, *in a military point of view*, reſolves itſelf into a very ſmall compaſs indeed. The only queſtion that could ariſe, was, whether it ought to be defended or evacuated; and this muſt evidently have depended upon whether they could furniſh the means of an adequate defence.

The melancholy events that ſubſequently occurred there, explained at once to us their ſyſtem of acting; and the conſideration of the force they might have applied to the defence of that town will evidently ſhew the folly of their conduct. The defence was inſtantly decided on, and the means they looked to apparently ſuch as they could draw from Gibraltar, from Italy, or from Spain; for though the uſual alertneſs in Government was immediately diſplayed in creating appointments

pointments and waſting public treaſure, yet not a ſingle regiment of Britiſh infantry was ſent from England for the protection of the place. The want of men was here however held out as an apology; and certainly it is a valid one, if true. But the want of men, though ſubſtantial after they had determined to defend it, ought to have come into the original ſcale of conſideration in deciding upon attempting the defence. Of men, and good men however, there was in reality no want. That army which has ſince rendered ſuch eſſential ſervice to their country under Sir Charles Grey, and which now unfortunately lives but in the memory of its victories, was ready to act and at hand. To defend this new acquiſition in the Mediterranean, they would not at the time give up a projected ſcheme of conqueſt in the Weſt Indies; and though to the plan of invading France, where they had then no footing,

footing, they at laſt ſacrificed this laſt enterpriſe, ſtill they would not ſend a man to Toulon, notwithſtanding our faith was pledged to its ſupport, and every tie of policy and honour alike called upon us to defend it vigorouſly, or to evacuate it totally.

In chooſing a middle line, they ſhewed a want of energy in their military capacity, a want of all regard to faith in their political. In the motley confuſion of their mixed garriſon the fate of the place ſoon became obvious; the loſs of it was a natural conſequence of their meaſures; and the inadequacy and feebleneſs of the conduct of Miniſters, is the only point that ought to excite the aſtoniſhment of the public on the occaſion.

Here again it is obvious how much they under-

under-rated the character and ſituation of their enemy; a fact ſtill further illuſtrated by the unaccountable folly of 2000 men having attempted the capture of Martinico in the Weſt Indies—an undertaking that met with the fate its original raſhneſs richly merited.

Such was the conduct of our Miniſters in the firſt campaign; failure uniformly attended all their meaſures, diſaſter purſued every ſtep they adopted; and though few could be found of their moſt ſanguine adherents to defend their paſt conduct, ſtill moſt looked forward in hopes that the experience they had acquired would ſerve as a wholeſome leſſon in future; and that paſt errors would have ſo far proved uſeful, as to have obviated the poſſibility in times to come of ſimilar principles occaſioning ſimilar diſaſters.

The preſent campaign then here comes under conſideration; and fortunate it would indeed be for the country, could we any where obſerve the happy effects of dear-bought experience; or could we any how trace in providence, foreſight, vigour, and energy, the juſt return for that unlimited confidence repoſed in Government by the nation at large. The hiſtory of this year, as far as relates to the war in Europe, is of a nature far too melancholy to be much or long dwelt on. It is a tale of diſaſters unparalleled in hiſtory—it is an accumulation of misfortune beyond the precedent of former days. In this inveſtigation only one point appears to implicate the conduct and character of Miniſters; with the late events they could have no immediate interference; theſe were but military exertions to ward off impending ruin; and, from the capture of Ypres to the preſent hour, the hiſ-

tory of the campaign is but the journal of a flight.

Previous however to the ſurrender of that place, it becomes a moſt ſerious matter of diſcuſſion, how far the Miniſters afforded that aid it was their duty to have furniſhed to the allied army; and whether it was not in their power to have prevented much of the ſubſequent diſaſter, by early and vigorous meaſures.

The poſition occupied by the French at Menin and Courtray, at the very opening of the campaign, at once preſented a formidable bar to the poſſibility of carrying on offenſive operations till theſe places were retaken. They were accordingly attacked, but without ſucceſs. The French in return endeavoured to turn the poſition of the Allies at Tournay; and though they failed

to

to the extent of their expectation, yet the impreſſion they left that day in the minds of their opponents, was of a nature not eaſily to be effaced *. In this ſituation of things then, it was obvious, though the neceſſity of the ſervice was imminent, that the chance of ſucceſs was infinitely doubtful with the force then in the field. To ſtrengthen that army, I muſt preſume, was therefore the duty of Miniſters—to ſtrengthen it ere repeated defeat and diſaſter had rendered even every poſſible reinforcement but an increaſed and ſure prey to the ſuperiority of the enemy. Had Lord Moira's army been ſent to reinforce Clairfayt previous to his repeated defeats, the relieving of Ypres might

* The account given by ſome of the oldeſt officers in the Auſtrian ſervice deſcribes this action as exceeding in fury, obſtinacy, and weight of fire, any they had ever known in the whole courſe of their ſervice againſt the late King of Pruſſia.

have been poſſibly effected: by poſtponing the ſending that corps till the firſt and great iſſue before that place was completely decided, they rendered it of no real uſe. Let me not here be underſtood poſitively to ſtate, that reinforcing General Clairfayt with Earl Moira's corps would have enabled him to force the covering army at Ypres. This is a military point, reſting on documents and knowledge I cannot be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs: all I mean to ſay is, that in point of common ſenſe, if that army was ever to ſerve on the northern frontier, it ought to have been ſent with a view to prevent, and not with a certainty of ſharing diſaſter. As it was, its orders were indeed ſingular. No view of aſſiſting General Clairfayt, no wiſh to give aid to the Duke of York, no idea of ſuccouring the army, led it to Flanders; but the orders of Miniſters to the commander re-

ſtricted him to the defence of Oſtend—a place notoriouſly untenable by a garriſon, to be defended only by an army in the field. Happily however for our cauſe, the excellent officer to whom this corps was truſted, by acting from the preſſure of the moment, preſerved to England a gallant body of troops, now forming part of the army which has of late been retreating from poſt to poſt in Holland, at the fiat of General Pichegru; exhibiting on the one hand the ultimate effects of the original military inefficiency of the Miniſters, and on the other the deplorable depth of calamity into which a nation may be plunged, when led to ſupport meaſures adopted not from a matured and well digeſted conſideration of means and force, but from opinions reſting on the baſis of preſumptuous ignorance, generated not by wiſdom and provi-

dence, but ariſing out of folly, vanity, and want of foreſight *.

Where or how this will end, it is not for me to decide; let it be determined by thoſe who in the capture of the Low Countries, previous to our embarking in the war, ſaw the deſtruction of Great Britain; who in

* It has been much the faſhion to introduce the chance of war as an apology for our ſituation and a ſcreen to our Miniſters. In a narrow ſcale of military operation it may at times be with propriety urged, but in the extended experience of two years it neither can nor ought to be admitted into our conſideration. Thoſe too who urge it will do well to remember, that this chance of war, if ſo applied, is the greateſt of all equalizers; it levels all diſtinctions of character and merit; it applies equally to ſucceſs and diſaſters; it alike accounts for the glories of Lord Chatham's adminiſtration, and the diſgrace of our arms in the preſent.

the

the ruin of the Bank of Amſterdam ſaw the fate of the Bank of England *.

There are now but few other military points which remain to be noticed. The fate of Lord Moira's army has already been ſtated. It is not improbable it was originally aſſembled, more with an intention to amuſe the public mind, than from any ſerious plan of its ever being employed. From the gallantry of the troops, much; and from the character and talents of the commander, every thing was fairly to be expected: but it remains for the ingenuity of the preſent Government to explain the grounds on which for ſix months that corps remained perfectly inactive; we being in complete poſſeſſion of the ſea, and Miniſters daily vaunting (with what truth is of little

* The language held by Mr. Burke and his aſſociates to urge us on to war.

conſequence) the certainty of internal convulſion in France.

In the expedition to the Weſt Indies, ſucceſsful as it has fortunately proved, we may again trace the ſteadineſs with which they have conſtantly adhered to their fatal principles. It originally conſiſted of ten thouſand men: when it ſailed it had been reduced to half that number. With this inadequate force however, the ability, the enterpriſing ſpirit and indefatigable activity of Sir Charles Grey effected the whole of the object; he put us in poſſeſſion of all the French Weſt India Iſlands: but in this ſituation, though they acknowledged the importance of the conqueſt, they had neither foreſight to diſcern the probability, nor energy to counteract the poſſibility, of France attempting to repoſſeſs herſelf of thoſe important iſlands. A handful of men got eaſy repoſſeſſion

repoſſeſſion of the greateſt part of Guadaloupe *. Inſtead of being re-inforced from home, our Commander in Chief ſaw himſelf completely forgotten; and at a period when it was neceſſary to act with vigour, he found himſelf charged with the defence of all our poſſeſſions, with a force notoriouſly inſufficient for the ſafety of one of the iſlands.

In the Mediterranean we have indeed, at the expence of maintaining for months on that ſervice a ſquadron that might otherwiſe have been more uſefully employed, added the kingdom of Corſica to the Crown of Great Britain: but how far the military proviſion of Miniſters was adequate to the

* It is upon no light or trivial authority I think I can aſſert that Miniſters had intelligence of this expedition ſoon after its ſailing from France, though no ſteps were taken in conſequence.

attempt, is to be aſcertained by the conduct of the Commander in Chief *. To the gallantry of our officers and men we here, as on many other occaſions, owe much; to the providence and foreſight of the Miniſters, nothing.

In their management of the navy it is unneceſſary for my purpoſe to trace much of their conduct: it explains itſelf, and demonſtrates its proceeding from the ſame principles which have actuated them throughout. Here even the indolence of office could not communicate inactivity to our gallant officers and brave ſeamen. Where they have been enabled to act, thank God! they

* General Dundas is ſuppoſed to have reſigned the command in conſequence of a diſpute with Lord Hood, who, when he ſubſequently applied to the acting commander for military force, was refuſed, on the ground of the inadequacy of his numbers.

have yet ſucceeded, and have fortunately for us ſtill maintained Britiſh ſuperiority on its favourite element. It has not been their fault, if our trade has met with an inadequate protection. To them the blame cannot be attributed, that (in ſight of our own coaſt, under the eye of the Miniſter when at the reſidence attached to the office he has obtained from a confiding and deluded country) no ſhip was to be found to keep French gun-boats within the harbour of Dunkirk. That no naval protection was afforded to either our American or Eaſt India poſſeſſions, lies not at their door. That all the French fleets have arrived with ſafety in their own ports; that they have been ſupplied with ſalt-petre from India, corn from America, and naval ſtores from the Baltic, cannot be charged againſt our officers and ſeamen.

That

That Lord Howe was under the neceſſity of engaging an enemy ſuperior in numbers, by which the French American fleet got ſafely into Breſt, was not the fault of this gallant officer. His was indeed the well-earned merit of the victory; he needs not the aid of external decoration to make him the admiration of every Engliſhman. But it remains for the Miniſter to give a ſatisfactory account to the public how theſe things have happened; to inform us why a number of Engliſh veſſels, which it is conſiderably within bounds to ſtate as amounting to upwards of 800, are now riding in French ports; how it comes that upwards of 12,000 Britiſh ſeamen are now groaning in French gaols; and how it happens, that at this moment the French are providing for the enſuing naval campaign with ſtores captured from Great Britain.

I have

I have now, as ſhortly as the nature of the ſubject would admit, endeavoured to ſhew the deſtructive and erroneous policy that has influenced the military conduct of Miniſters: a line ſtill more completely to be aſcertained by a conciſe view of their conduct to neutral nations; not as it regards its juſtice or iniquity, but as it tends to elucidate the true principles on which they have acted. It would be foreign to my preſent purpoſe, wiſhing only to form an accurate idea of the future confidence which ought to be extended to Miniſters in the hour of calamity, by a reference to their paſt, to enter into a diſcuſſion on any general principle of their policy: indeed it would not only be unneceſſary, but impoſſible. No principle to which we may refer can for a moment be ſuppoſed to have influenced them, becauſe every different meaſure the

ingenuity

ingenuity of man could have adopted has by them at various periods been uſed.

Let us look round the Powers of the civiliſed world, and there cannot be found, from thoſe of the greateſt importance in the general ſcale to thoſe of the leaſt conſequence, a ſingle State that has not ſince the beginning of the conteſt been inſulted by inſolent and dictatorial mandates in the hour of ſuppoſed ſuperiority, and which ſubſequently has not had an opportunity of thoroughly underſtanding the character of Adminiſtration, by the change of language they have in the moment of calamity adopted. Not ſatisfied with aiming at the demolition of the government of France, they ſtruck at the freedom of action of every independent and neutral State in Europe. If France has attempted to diſſeminate in any public manner her

her Jacobin principles, they have in a more ſtriking mode endeavoured to maintain doctrines relative to neutral powers, the moſt arbitrary that ever diſgraced the annals of tyranny; they have gone beyond even the junto of tyrants with whom they have been acting; and, to the aſtoniſhment of the world, we have ſeen Britiſh ambaſſadors outſtripping in violence the agents of deſpotiſm.

On examining the conduct of France in the year 1792, we may find much to blame in their treatment of the Italian Powers. Their fleet commanded the Mediterranean, and their meaſures originated from the unprincipled uſe they made of that ſuperiority. Their inſulting mandates were conveyed to the King of Naples by a grenadier, and neceſſity forced him to acquieſce in their wiſhes. In the enſuing year the Britiſh fleet obtained ſimilar poſſeſſion of that ſea,

and

and the very reprobated conduct of the French became the example we followed. The Grand Duke of Tuscany was insulted, and the tyrannical exertion of superior force compelled him to submit. The republic of Genoa, because weak, was oppressed; the laws of neutral nations were totally disregarded; the consequence of our power was the certainty of oppression. In the North our conduct has been dictated by similar motives; with this single difference, that, in proportion to the superior power of the Northern Courts, our commands have been put in a lower tone: but the spirit is the same, our system of acting exactly similar.

If we look to America, a uniformity of conduct will appear; and though every well-wisher to his country must join with me in sincerely hoping the existing differences with that Continent may be happily accommodated,

modated, yet I may venture to assert, without contradiction, that desirable event must be the produce of American moderation, and not of British justice or equity*.

The

*If the conduct of France at Naples was unjustifiable, what shall we say to an Ambassador of Great Britain at the Court of Tuscany (acting of course only up to his orders) insulting the Grand Duke, by stating in a memorial to all the foreign Ministers, bearing date May 23, 1793, "that the measures taken with regard "to the French nation solely and entirely originated "from the instigations and councils of a single person, "whose ascendency and power over the mind of his "Royal Highness could not, from his tendereſt in- "fancy to the present moment, be eradicated." And subsequently on the 5th of October, "The undersigned "is obliged to declare, in order that his Royal High- "ness the Grand Duke may be informed of it, that "Admiral Lord Hood has ordered an English squadron, "in conjunction with a detachment from the Spanish "fleet, to set sail for Leghorn, there to act according "to the part which his Royal Highness may take. The "unjust and notorious partiality of Tuscany in favour

"of

The character of thoſe who have thus managed the intereſts of their country diſplays

" of the French, and the vaſt ſeizure of corn and ef-
" fects belonging to merchants of Toulon at Leghorn,
" at a time when the armies of their Britannic and
" Spaniſh Majeſties had occaſion for the ſame articles,
" evidently prove the injury which enſues from ſuch a
" neutrality for the operations of the Allies. In con-
" ſequence Admiral Lord Hood declares, in the name
" of the King his maſter, that if, within the ſpace
" of twelve hours after the repreſentations of the un-
" derſigned, his Royal Highneſs the Grand Duke does
" not reſolve to ſend away M. de la Flotte and his ad-
" herents from Tuſcany, the ſquadron will act offen-
" ſively againſt the port and city of Leghorn.

" The unhappy conſequences of this proceeding
" can alone be imputed to thoſe who have had the
" audacity to give perfidious advice, and to make falſe
" repreſentations upon the preſent ſtate of affairs—
" they alone will have to anſwer for all that may
" happen henceforward."

The papers in reſpect to Genoa and the North are too voluminous

plays itſelf in their conduct in a ſtronger way than I ſhall venture to ſtate it; but when we attend farther to dates, and find we aſcertain the hour of violence and oppreſſion by a reference to our ſucceſs or failure, where can a doubt remain that their judgment has all along been formed by a falſe criterion, their meaſures directed by an erroneous policy?

Nay, even to thoſe of the French for whom they were fighting they have ex-

voluminous to be here inſerted; they are however exactly of a ſimilar nature. Sweden and Denmark have at length emancipated themſelves from our violence by a ſerious armament; and America, after having borne (with a degree of patience exhibited only in a climate where the pureſt patriotiſm reigns, and the immortal Waſhington governs) all our tyrannical proceedings, has inſiſted at length upon an unequivocal explanation of points that both for the honour and intereſt of this country ought long ago to have been ſettled.

tended the full conviction of their baneful meaſures. They never could ſee expeditions aimed at their foreign poſſeſſions, without obſerving, on the one hand, an application of our force completely foreign from the avowed purpoſe of the war, and originating from a miſtaken idea of the reſources of France; and, on the other, a treacherous deſign of diſmembering and ruining what Miniſters affected to ſupport. If the ſending an army to the Weſt Indies weakened the force you could apply at home againſt France, the taking poſſeſſion of thoſe iſlands gave ſtill greater ſtrength to the rulers at Paris. If, to join the kingdom of Corſica to the Crown of Great Britain, conſiderable force was ſimilarly miſapplied, the very conqueſt of that iſland has confirmed the revolutionary government in France.

We have betrayed even the intereſts of our

our friends; and the Emigrants muſt view with diſguſt, while the Jacobins contemplate with joy, the iniquity of our proceedings.—In ſhort, the policy of Pilnitz has univerſally been ours: the *fides Punica* is the faith of our Miniſters.—We have conducted ourſelves on a falſe opinion of our ſtrength, and of French weakneſs; we have aimed at private advantage more than general good; we have ruined only our friends, and have added to the ſtrength and energy of our enemy. The conſequence of all this, however unfortunate, is but perfectly natural; and as we now ſee the original cruſaders hiding their diminiſhed heads in their German poſſeſſions, ſo are we with our allies, the Dutch, left almoſt ſingly in the conteſt; ſtriking examples of the truth of that approved maxim—That in unprincipled purſuits there can be no concert; be-

tween Powers purſuing ſuch ends there can be no confidence *.

From

* The authenticity of the following letter, I am well aware, from the nature of its contents, and the high authority it gives to the military doctrines I have ſtated, will be attempted to be held out as a fiction. It muſt eaſily, however, occur to every conſiderate perſon, that great impropriety might attend my diſcloſing the channel through which it fell into my hands. This I muſt therefore decline doing; but I may with ſafety affirm, from a variety of circumſtances, that I have every reaſon to ſuppoſe it genuine that a man can have.

The original is in French; and, in the tranſlation, language is a good deal ſacrificed to preciſion.

Copy of a Letter from the DUKE of BRUNSWICK to the KING of PRUSSIA.

" The motives, Sire, which make me deſire my re-
" call from the army are founded upon the unhappy
" experience, *that the want of connection, the diſtruſt,*
" *the egotiſm, the ſpirit of cabal,* have diſconcerted the
" meaſures adopted during the two laſt campaigns, and
" ſtill

From this retroſpect of the conduct of the preſent Adminiſtration; from judging by

" ſtill diſconcert the meaſures taken by the Combined
" Armies. Oppreſſed by the misfortune of being in-
" volved, by the errors of others, in the unfortunate
" ſituation wherein I find myſelf, I feel very ſenſibly
" that the world judges of military characters by
" their ſucceſſes, without examining cauſes. Raiſing
" the ſiege or the blockade of Landau, will make an
" epoch in the hiſtory of this unfortunate war; and I
" have the misfortune of being implicated in it. The
" reproach will fall upon me, and the innocent will
" be confounded with the guilty. Notwithſtanding all
" misfortunes, I would not have given way to my incli-
" nation of laying at your Majeſty's feet my deſire of re-
" linquiſhing a career which has been the principal ſtudy
" of my life: but when one has loſt one's trouble,
" one's labour and efforts; when the objects of the
" campaign are loſt, and there is no hope that a
" third campaign may offer a more favourable iſſue,
" what part remains to be taken by the man the moſt
" attached to, the moſt zealous for, your Majeſty's inte-
" reſts and your cauſe, but that of avoiding further

 " diſaſters?

by the ſureſt of all criterions, the experience of the paſt; thinking as I do of the motives

" diſaſters? The ſame reaſons now divide the Powers " which have hitherto divided them: The movements " of the armies will ſuffer from it, as they have hi- " therto done: Their motions will be retarded and " embarraſſed, and the delay of re-eſtabliſhing the " Pruſſian army, politically neceſſary, will become " perhaps the ſource of a train of misfortunes for " next campaign, the conſequences of which are not " to be calculated. It is not war which I object to: " It is not war which I wiſh to avoid; but it is diſ- " honour which I fear in my ſituation, where the " faults of other Generals would fall upon me, and " where I could neither act according to my prin- " ciples, nor according to my proſpects. Your Ma- " jeſty will perhaps remember what I had the honour " to repreſent to you the day you quitted Eſcheveiler: " I expoſed all my embarraſſments, my troubles and " my misfortunes; I exerted all my efforts to prevent " any inconveniency: Unfortunately the event has " proved the inſufficiency thereof; it is therefore only " the intimate perſuaſion I have of the impoſſibility

" I am

motives that have influenced them, it would be to betray my duty, and violate the truſt repoſed in me, were I, in any ſituation to which either their paſt or preſent infatuation may drive the country, to give to them that confidence which ought, I am ready to grant, to be extended to Government in the cloſing ſcenes of this deplorable tragedy. To act unanimouſly, may, from the nature of

" I am in to effect what is right, which dictates to " me the meaſure of requeſting your Majeſty to ap- " point a ſucceſſor to me as ſoon as poſſible. This " meaſure, however afflicting to me, is nevertheleſs a " conſequence of thoſe ſorrowful reflections I have " made upon my ſituation. Prudence requires I ſhould " retire, and honour adviſes it. *When a great nation* " *like that of France is conducted by the terror of puniſh-* " *ments, and by enthuſiaſm, an unanimous ſentiment, and* " *the ſame principle, ought to prevail in the meaſures of the* " *coaleſced Powers. But when, inſtead thereof, each army* " *acts ſeparately and alone of its own accord, without any* " *fixed plan, without unanimity, and without principles,*

of our ſituation, be deſirable; but to act with thoſe whoſe conduct is beſt explained by the neceſſity of that ſituation, is completely impoſſible. In the ſame line of oppoſition I have hitherto adopted I muſt ſtill continue—It is a line that may not have met with your approbation, becauſe your view of the ſubject may have been different; but it is at leaſt one, which in my mode of conſidering it I have conſcien-

" *the conſequences are ſuch as we have ſeen at Dunkirk,*
" *at raiſing the blockade of Maubeuge, at the ſtorming*
" *of Lyons, at the deſtruction of Toulon, and at the*
" *raiſing of the blockade of Landau.* Heaven preſerve
" your Majeſty from great misfortunes! *but every thing*
" *is to be feared, if confidence, harmony, uniformity of*
" *ſentiments, of principles, and of actions, do not take*
" *place of the oppoſite ſentiments which have been the*
" *ſource of all misfortunes for two years paſt.* My beſt
" wiſhes always attend your Majeſty, and your glory
" will be my happineſs.

" Oppenheim, Jan. 6, 1794."

tiouſly

tiouſly followed, to which I muſt invariably adhere, and to which too I am led by a comparative view of the enlarged policy and enlightened underſtanding of that perſon who originally ſtepped forward, in defiance of calumny, and in deſpite of temporary unpopularity, to ſave his country from this maſs of calamity. It would ill become me, who conſider the friendſhip of Mr. Fox as the honour of my private life, and a ſteady adherence to his political principles to be the ſole merit of my public character, to ſtate to you what might be conceived to ariſe from perſonal predilection, or a partial political opinion. I feel no heſitation however in referring it to your own wiſdom to decide, in calling upon every individual, from the prince to the peaſant, to determine, after a due conſideration of the reſpective conduct of the preſent Miniſtry, and of that great ſtateſman, whether the

the talents requiſite to ſave the country are to be found in the enlightened wiſdom, in the capacious mind and the prophetic ſpirit of Mr. Fox, or in the miſerable policy, the time-ſerving expedients and wretched ſubterfuges of the preſent Cabinet.

I have now endeavoured to lay before you the ſources of my political action at an æra that may truly be ſaid to be not only big with the fate of this country but of the civilized world. I have attempted to explain the grounds on which the Revolution in France happened; to eſtabliſh that the deadly malady of funding was the diſorder, an annual deficit of nearly three millions the complaint; and that in the diſſolution of the patient an awful and tremendous leſſon to ſurrounding kingdoms is given; a convincing proof that in public communities, as in individual inſtances,

" the paths of glory lead but to the grave." I have attempted to point out to you, that the various component parts of the old regime in France naturally led by progreſſive ſteps to the ſituation in which they now ſtand; and a reference to the paſt experience of hiſtory, a knowledge of the ſufferings they at preſent endure, might not improbably lead us to conjecture, that independent of our interference a revulſion may happen, when individual ſecurity will be eſtabliſhed, and property duly protected.

It has been my wiſh to repel the libellous inſinuation of the probability of a ſimilar revolution happening in this country. Unleſs the oppreſſion of the government be as great, and our financial reſources as exhauſted, the poſition is abſurd. I have endeavoured to ſhew, that no wiſe policy led us to depart from our original ſyſtem of neutrality,

trality, that private intrigue occaſioned it, and that public calamity has attended it. I have attempted to explain the evils attending the ſchiſm artfully created in the Whig party, and endeavoured to eſtabliſh the impolicy of in future confiding in Miniſters, by a reference to their paſt conduct.

One ſubject I have however carefully avoided entering on. The management of the interior policy at home forms indeed a ſtriking feature in the hiſtory of the preſent day. We have ſeen the mild practice of the Britiſh law departed from; obſolete ſtatutes reſorted to for temporary purpoſes; and temporary conſtructions attempted to be given to known and defined laws; much of the friendly intercourſe and relation that ſubſiſted between the wealthy and the indigent (the beſt cement to the ſtability of our conſtitution) broken down; the ſympathetic

tic ſpirit of confidence and affection that reigned in the breaſts of all, annihilated. A ſyſtem of *eſpionage* * has ſpread abroad a univerſal feeling of jealouſy and doubt: the aſſertion of conſpiracy has divided and diſjointed the beſt energies of our country. The character of the nation has been calumniated, the ſpirit of the people belied and blaſphemed. On this however at the preſent moment it might be improper to dwell. The impending trials will determine much. Thank God! the lives of our countrymen, and our beſt intereſts, are finally to be confided to the ſolid judgment and impartial deciſion of an Engliſh Jury.

* It is moſt ſingular, that to deſcribe the ſyſtem of the preſent day, we are obliged to have recourſe to a French term. To ſuch a ſyſtem Engliſhmen have been ſo little accuſtomed, that there is not even a word in their language to convey the idea.

I have now completed my original intention: and if I have defeated the calumnious insinuations that have been thrown out; if I have shewn plainly and intelligibly the principles I have acted upon, my object is effected. If my language has been strong, it appears to me to suit the nature of the times. I entertain no personal animosity against any man; political conduct is the only source of my attack. I look not for applause, neither do I apprehend censure; for I know my purpose to be honest, and the execution must necessarily be such as might reasonably be expected from one who has now certainly for the first time, most probably for the last, endeavoured to attract the attention of his constituents or his countrymen.

London,
Nov. 1st, 1794.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page	Line	
26	5	*for* a *read* the
52	13	*dele* that
108	3	*after the word* ſterling *inſert* annually
145	14	*dele* own
154	5	*for* theſe *read* the
202	6	*for* or *read* of
245	laſt	*for* be *read* have been

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